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FOOTPRINTS IN SPAIN

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FOOTPRINTS IN SPAIN

BY
LIEUT.-COLONEL H. A. NEWELL

F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "TOPEE AND TURBAN," ETC.

WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

“**I**L n'ya plus de Pyrenees!” The historic boast, placed by Voltaire in the mouth of Louis XIV, has never been justified by facts. In the beginning Nature determined her own boundaries, the mountains and the sea. These still retain their ancient significance, and will continue to do so let statesmen shuffle the cards as they may. When all is said and done maps are merely so many scraps of paper. No political upheaval, however momentous, has brought about a corresponding earthquake, not even when Napoleon marched his army across the Alps, the Barbarians sacked Rome, or Constantinople fell to the Muhammadans.

Screened by the formidable barrier of the Pyrenees Spain has worked out her strange and dramatic destiny with comparatively little interference from the rest of Europe, for whom she has remained more or less of a mystery. The veil is now being lifted. Increased facilities of travel are encouraging foreigners to visit the Peninsula, although the decision still entails a certain mental effort not untinged with misgiving. The step into the unknown once taken the majority are surprised to find Spain entirely different to what they had been led to expect. To begin with the atmosphere does not reek of garlic, nor is every dish flavoured with that pungent plant. The stranger need suffer no anxiety as to his personal safety. Gloomy tales of the Inquisition, the record of hair raising adventures with brigands, and grim legends of the vanished Moor have exercised a powerful influence upon his subconscious intellect, and inspired mental pictures of sinister portent. Very probably he had imagined the Spanish gentleman as a silent, proud and unapproachable *hidalgo*, black haired and dark skinned, his *sombrero* drawn over beetling brows, and a dagger concealed under the folds of an all enveloping mantle. His ideas of the Spanish lady were romantically vague. Veiled in the bewitching folds of her *mantilla* she had appealed to him as an ethereal being, the mingled product of Convent and harem, a languid voluptuous beauty seductive as a *houri* and discreet as a nun.

Great, then, is his surprise at finding all his preconceived

notions at fault. Far from being haughty and reserved Spaniards are the most democratic and accessible people imaginable. Naturally polite, their manners are vivacious, and they are frank and friendly in their intercourse with strangers. Possibly what impressed me most was their gaiety. I had not heard such spontaneous laughter since August, 1914. Listening to their merriment I realised, with a pang, how sad the world had become beyond the Pyrenees.

Both men and women are voluble talkers. The latter are refreshingly outspoken and unaffected. The foreigner is, for them, an object of lively and goodnatured curiosity. They correct his pronunciation, tender him helpful advice and ply him, generally, with questions and information. In appearance they are eminently feminine, and though distinctly fat they are light and graceful in their movements. Many have fair complexions and some have red hair. They dress simply and modestly. Children wear the gayest of colours but their elders strictly adhere to black. Foreigners will do well to bear this rule in mind when travelling in Spain as, otherwise, they are liable to excite a disconcerting degree of attention. An American lady told me that she had been literally mobbed in Madrid for venturing to appear in a hat trimmed with roses. Two other ladies were reduced to tears by the ridicule excited by their coloured dresses in Seville. A fourth assured me that she felt unpleasantly conspicuous until she discarded a hat, and adopted a mantilla, after which she passed unnoticed despite her light hair and blue eyes.

Generally speaking Spaniards are not linguists. I met few who spoke any language but their own native Castilian, or Catalan. They claim, with pride, that their tongue is pronounced as it is written. This assertion appears paradoxical to the stranger, who finds himself called upon to say Hesus for Jesus, Valenthia for Valencia and Virhen for Virgin, not to mention certain difficult linguistic feats with double "L's" and "N's." Furthermore the practice of giving C the sound of "th" has a lisping effect that is not altogether pleasant.

Curious though it may seem the average stranger, in Spain, finds the country of such absorbing interest, that he has little attention to spare for the inhabitants. It is not modern Spain that appeals to him, but that mighty Empire of the past, which strews the entire Peninsula with monuments. Every historical building is a milestone on Time's highway. Each mighty Cathedral is an epic in granite and marble.

The more he advances the further back he goes descending, step by step, the long stairway of the centuries until, at Cadiz, he comes face to face with the old gods, and knows that he has reached that far-off golden age beyond which mere man may not penetrate.

To the primitive Spain of those days came the Phœnicians in their long many oared galleys. They were traders, not conquerors, or missionaries and established their emporiums on the seashore. In dealing with the native Iberian and Celtic tribes they trusted to their wits and avoided appealing to arms, and religious propaganda. Gradually, however, as their business expanded, they found themselves compelled to exercise a certain amount of political domination. This led to war, hence the legends of the battle of the Titans, in which Hercules, afterwards deified by the Greeks, emerged victorious and founded Cadiz.

The Phœnicians were followed by the Greeks, then came the Romans and the complete absorption of the Iberian Peninsula in the Latin empire for a period of six centuries. During it Spain rose to a high degree of civilisation, luxury and splendour, as is testified by widely scattered remains of fortifications, palaces, temples, theatres and viaducts. With the decline of Roman power the country was subjected to repeated barbarian raids from the north until the Visigoths established their supremacy. At first the new capital was at Toulouse but was subsequently moved south to Toledo.

In 711 the Arabs crossed the narrow straits from Africa and, in an incredibly short time, were masters of the Peninsula with headquarters at Cordova. The last Visigothic King was slain, and the remnant of his people forced to take refuge in the mountain fastnesses of Asturia. From that date until the fall of Granada, the last Muhammadan stronghold, in 1492, incessant warfare prevailed between the followers of the Cross and the Crescent. The secret of the success of the one, and the overthrow of the other is not far to seek. Whereas the Arabs had started with a united control they had gradually split up into a number of petty principalities. On the other hand the Christian states of Leon, Castile, Aragon and Catalonia had gradually been brought closer together until the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella brought about the unification of the entire Peninsula, with the exception of Portugal. The last named had been erected into a county by Alfonso VI and bestowed, as dowry, upon his natural daughter Teresa, whom he married to Henry of

Burgundy. Their son Alfonso succeeded in converting his patrimony into a kingdom in 1179. But for this cleavage the ultimate world empire established by Spain under Charles V of Austria, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, might have been even greater, as it certainly would have been more enduring.

Under Philip II the policy pursued by the ruler of Spain admirably illustrated the truth of the old Italian proverb, "He who would grasp too much holds nothing fast." The treasure of the Indies and of America was frittered away in foolish wars. When the wealthiest, and the most powerful monarch of his day breathed his last in the Escorial, the grim palace of tombs built with funds confiscated from the rich see of Toledo, and was laid to rest in the coffin made from the timbers of the "Cinco Llagos," the great galleon which had led the Spanish Armada to victory at Lepanto, he left to his heir the hopeless heritage of a bankrupt realm, and to his country a legacy of untold suffering. The Spain of to-day is eloquent of this glory and of this ruin. She makes no boast of one, and no attempt to conceal the other. Therein lies her charm and her appeal—her innate nobility.

In the following pages I merely limit myself to an account of a brief summer holiday in Spain, a trip such as any other tourist can take. For me it has been a voyage of discovery, a journey through wonderland, a backward glimpse into the Middle Ages. I do not pretend, however, that Spain will appeal to every taste. Many will be frankly disappointed. The hunter after curios, and the souvenir seeker will add nothing to their store unless, perchance, a fan, a mantilla, a comb and a shawl, and these, most probably, of foreign manufacture. Spain proves irresistible to the dreamer, the artist, the philosopher and the historian. I venture to think that a knowledge of the East, and of Oriental peoples, more especially of those professing the Muhammadan religion, renders Spain more intelligible and therefore more interesting, for she is essentially the combined product of East and West.

To visit a country, without having previously mastered something of its history, is as futile as to attempt to read a book in an unknown language. The text is there, clear before the eyes, but what of the understanding? This is particularly true of Spain, where the trivial present is completely thrown into the shade by the mighty past, and where the first faint glimmerings of a future dawn are as yet barely discernible on the horizon.

FOOTPRINTS IN SPAIN

CHAPTER I

ON THE THRESHOLD OF SPAIN

THE most prosaic of adventures, or rather of mis-adventures, was responsible for my entering Spain at night, instead of in the brilliant sunshine of a hot May afternoon, as had been my original intention. The same perverse destiny ordered that I should travel by omnibus train, stop at every wayside station between the sleepy old cathedral city of Narbonne and the frontier, miss the connection on to Barcelona, and spend from 10 p.m. until 4.30 the next morning, waiting upon the threshold of one of the most romantic and little known countries in Europe.

As a matter of fact I had no real cause to regret the delay. The leisurely mode of progress, which it entailed, proved an advantage. It enabled me to gain a far better idea of the country side than would have been possible had I hurried through in an express.

From Narbonne to the Spanish border the scenery is increasingly wild, irregular and picturesque. For the greater part of the distance the railway follows the coast. Soon a narrow line of intense blue appears low down on the horizon to left. Before long this thread-like streak of ultra-marine expands into a sea so calm and radiant as to seem a mirror reflecting, in a deeper tone of azure, the cloudless sky overhead. Inland stretch low hills, of broken grey stone, dotted with the dark green of small bush, occasionally brightened by the glowing yellow of gorse. Patches of vine testify to spasmodic efforts at cultivating a somewhat ungrateful terrain. Backwaters form a succession of lakes. These add greatly to the general scenic effect, especially when the setting sun transforms them into vast sheets of flame, or the moon, by a subtle alchemy all its own, transmutes their dark waters

into brightest silver. A diminutive island emerges from the midst of one of these secret inland seas. Every inch of it is covered with rude stone houses. Alongside the lonely fishing village a fleet of sailing vessels rides at anchor, the tall crowded masts uncannily suggestive of a skeleton forest. Old and grim memories of forgotten wars—Pagan, Christian and Moor—kindle at sight of the many round watch towers, that mount guard on isolated and remote hill tops. Every little while the train halts at some insignificant place, not even dignified by a station. Often a mere paling suffices to mark the spot.

Shortly before reaching the small border town of Salcis a surprising old brick castle, of Moorish design, is sighted on the right. It lies low down in the plain at the foot of a long ridge of rugged grey hills, which form a protecting rampart immediately in the rear. Domes, of characteristic Saracenic type, crown the numerous round towers. Age has mellowed the red of the bricks to a rich tawny yellow. Unlike the majority of Chateaux en Espagne it is in an excellent state of preservation. The mediæval fortress has a distinctly oriental appearance, which makes vivid appeal to the imagination. How came it by its French setting if not by magic? Surely some geni of long ago caught it up in the middle of a dark Arabian night, and flew with it, and its enchanted Princess, from the neighbourhood of distant Damascus?

I have purposely refrained from seeking enlightenment as to the origin of the ancient yellow castle close to Salcis. Bitter experience has taught me that historians are by no means infallible, even when most prosy and erudite. This being the case I will, for this once, shun their pages and prefer my fiction to their fact.

It was 9 o'clock when the train reached the little, dimly lit station of Cerbère, on the French side of the frontier. Here a porter appeared at the carriage door. He bade me descend for passport inspection and examination of luggage. Following his lead I proceeded towards a long narrow room opening off the platform. The centre was enclosed by a species of counter, whereon were ranged trunks and handbags. Within this charmed circle stood several officials in uniform. After a wait of some fifteen minutes, the oft reiterated entreaties of my porter induced one of these dignitaries to look at my passport. This took some time as the light was bad. The fact that my photo had been taken in uniform drew forth some facetious remarks from him on the subject of the late

war. Thereafter he enquired if I had any gold, or silver concealed about my person, and whether I were travelling with more than five thousand francs? To all these questions I replied in the negative.

He passed on, leaving me to the tender mercies of a lady, who wielded a short length of white chalk. Apparently this badge of office entitled her to the greatest respect. My porter's attitude towards her was a discreet blend of the conciliatory and deferential. He said something to her rapidly in a low voice. As a result she scribbled some hieroglyphics on my luggage. The effect was magical. I was a free man. Only one more formality remained. I was required to present myself at the booking office, before which a long string of people were drawn up in single file. Here, after a considerable delay, my passport was again examined and finally stamped.

These important proceedings had taken time. I returned to the train, which moved on a short distance and stopped. It had reached the terminus. I was at Portbou, the far famed Spanish frontier. There was a thrill in the thought. Old traveller though I am, I can never enter a country for the first time without an appreciable quickening of the pulses.

At Portbou the formalities were even more complicated and long drawn out than at Cerbère. In addition, my command of Spanish was extremely limited. Two policemen possessed themselves of my passport. Despite my protests they walked away with it leaving me uncertain as to its fate and my own. I was next summoned to unlock my luggage. Spanish officials are either more inquisitive, or more conscientious than French. They made a thorough examination of the contents. Fortunately I travelled light, having merely a couple of handbags.

Finding the first class waiting room locked I approached the stationmaster and asked to have it opened. This he declined to allow. In vain I urged that my train did not leave until 4.30 the next morning. He remained obdurate. A dark swarthy looking individual, standing beside him, offered to permit me to pass the intervening period in the buffet for seven pesetas. At this the stationmaster informed me that I should not be allowed to spend the night in the train, or on the platform. Altogether I was beginning to harbour certain misgivings, when a man stepped up and bade me good evening. This was a preliminary to inviting me to stay the night at his fonda. Feeling that it was rather a

case of "any port in a storm" I followed him and his lantern down the steep, cobble paved street of the village. A sharp turn to the right brought us to the little fonda. The door stood hospitably open to the dark night. The interior was brilliantly lit up by electricity. I was not long in discovering that the illumination was the best thing about it. The inn, itself, was of the most modest description. Three men, of the labouring class, sat drinking red wine at a small wooden table. One wore a wide brimmed hat of black felt conspicuous for the height of its peaked crown. Probably his looks belied him, but his appearance was the reverse of prepossessing.

A stout handsome girl of sixteen, daughter of the proprietor, came forward to welcome me. This she did with the most cordial and unaffected spontaneity. It was my first experience of that frank spirit of friendliness, which I was destined to encounter frequently on my tour through Spain, and impressed me pleasantly. What would I have for supper? I intimated that I would take anything that was going. She disappeared to return, almost immediately, with a generous dish of lettuce, and a large loaf of bread, which she proceeded to cut up into some dozen, or more slices for my entertainment. In vain I sought to stay her reckless liberality. I had yet to learn that food was plentiful, and prodigally distributed south of the Pyrenees.

The girl was speedily followed by her mother, a buxom woman of about thirty-four, who placed a steaming dish of almost raw veal cutlets in front of me. My hostess spoke French and carried a baby, remarkable for the size and brilliancy of its staring black eyes. Sitting down at my table she began to chat to me. Soon I knew her family history. She had four children, two girls and two boys. This, Ferdinand, was the youngest. He was seven months old and was the proud possessor of four teeth. In many ways he was a remarkable baby.

I invited my friendly hostess to join me in a glass of wine. This, Spanish fashion, she declined, but in the nicest way imaginable. No, she never drank wine now. The doctor had forbidden it. Instead she took two litres of milk a day. It agreed with her much better. Besides, there was Ferdinand, the black eyed baby to be considered.

Next she passed to more general topics, translating my replies into Catalan, and Castilian, for the benefit of the other guests, who smiled their appreciation of the compliment. Homely though her conversation was it was shrewd.

"We are told," said she, "that France is a very poor country since the war, and that Spain is a rich one. Why, then, do so many of our men keep on crossing the frontier in search of work?"

"Perhaps," I hazarded, "France needs men, and Spain can spare them to her neighbour."

She shook her head.

"No! no!" she declared emphatically. "That isn't the reason."

A rather gloomy silence followed her last remark. The atmosphere was weighted with the heavy fragrance of tall white Annunciation lilies, a great mass of which was bunched in a vase on the counter. A diversion was created by the entrance of the host. It had taken him all this time to procure the return of my passport from the police. I intimated that I should like to retire. At this he and his entire family, Ferdinando included, escorted me out of doors, and up the street to a neighbouring house. A steep and narrow flight of stone stairs led to a number of small connecting rooms. The one allotted me was a square inner chamber almost entirely blocked by a big wooden bed. Of conveniences there were none. All shook hands with me, wishing me a cordial goodnight and "*Felix Viaje*," (happy journey). The host reiterated his assurance that I should be called at 3.30 a.m. Upon this I laid down, as I was, and was soon asleep.

A thundering knock on my door roused me all too soon. At that moment I demanded nothing better than to go on sleeping for ever. Switching on the electric light, which was particularly powerful, I looked at my watch. It was just 3 a.m. Once out in the street I found the night watchman waiting for me. He led me to the *fonda*, where he gave another resounding knock with his cudgel. The summons was answered by the innkeeper, who unlocked the door with one hand, while hurriedly drawing on his trousers with the other. Very soon he brought me a large and steaming bowl of *café con leche*, which, in true Spanish fashion, consisted of goat's milk flavoured with a mere dash of strong black coffee. Next I settled my bill. It amounted to seven and a half *pesetas*. Declining his offer of escort, I started uphill towards the station. The moon shed a faint radiance over the sleeping houses, and steep narrow cobble paved alleys, and a few stars still twinkled fitfully in the pallid morning sky.

The station, a long red brick edifice of a single storey,

showed no signs of life. The platform lacked seats and was deserted. I passed the time in studying a row of resplendent advertisements in highly glazed, and brilliantly coloured tiles, quite the most effective style of *réclame* that I had ever seen. It impressed me with an exaggerated idea of Spanish ingenuity and enterprise.

By 4 o'clock it was quite light. Countless swallows, or rather swifts, began to emerge from their nests under the station roof and circle overhead. The mosquitoes were equally active. A solitary man appeared on the platform and proceeded to unlock the door of a railway carriage, which he invited me to enter. Here I remained until summoned to report at the ticket office. A case of Muhammad and the mountain. In most countries the ticket collector comes to the passenger. Apparently they arrange matters otherwise in Spain. *Autre pays, autre mœurs*. I had yet to learn that the public are never considered in that stronghold of officialdom, the Iberian Peninsula.

Taking up my position, at the end of a long line of waiting passengers, I had plenty of leisure to study Spanish methods. It was some time before the small window of the ticket office opened. Seemingly each ticket issued entailed a voluminous amount of writing. Clean, new notes, and silver money were handed out as change. This was a striking contrast to France, where the precious metal is never seen, and where the most wretched, torn and filthy paper passes current. Upon receiving his change each passenger promptly tested it by ringing the heavy silver five peseta pieces upon the pavement.

At last it was all over. The train was actually moving out of Portbou. I leant back in my corner seat and drew a deep breath. I had crossed the threshold. I was in Spain.

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY TO BARCELONA

FIRST impressions are generally vivid. This is particularly the case with a stranger in a new country. The novelty of everything invests the most insignificant details with importance. Afterwards, when familiarity has blunted the keen edge of his interest, he is astonished at the trifles which stirred his curiosity in the beginning. This being true of all travellers I am not ashamed of confessing to a sense of irritation, even of resentment, when, on leaving Portbou, the train almost immediately plunged into a succession of tunnels. Between each brief eclipse of the kind a vivid glimpse was caught of blue sea, on the left, and an occasional narrow strip of pale golden sand.

Early though it was the sun was shining brightly. Men were already at work amid the yellow-green vineyards ranged in terraces on the steep sides of the mountains. As a matter of fact it was earlier than my watch led me to believe. Time goes back an hour on the Spanish side of the frontier. The first stop was at Culera, a diminutive cove wedged in between grass grown cliffs. Some half dozen small fishing boats lay in a row on the very limited allowance of beach. The newly risen sun shone low down on the sea whence it had so recently emerged. In the clear morning air the country side looked radiant. Brilliant clusters of yellow broom illuminated the sad grey-green of olive groves, and the sombre tones of cypress.

Soon after 5 a.m. a brief halt was made at Llansa, a big fishing village with pretensions to be taken seriously as a fashionable seaside resort. To this end it flaunted a Grand Hotel, and aggressively modern Café within sight of the railway. Behind stretched the tiled roofs, brown, sunburnt and restful, of old houses. Alone the age worn church lent itself to this incongruous blending of ancient and modern. It paraded a brand new belfry as complacently as an elderly spinster the most juvenile of hats. Unfortunately this

laudable attempt to propitiate the spirit of the times was not an unqualified success from an architectural point of view.

The train proceeded very slowly. Halts at wayside stations were frequent and unduly prolonged. Immense barrels were lined up on the platforms in proof, were any needed, of the fertility of the many vines. Gradually the mountains spread out. The expanding plain stretched verdant to the sea. Scarlet poppies flamed amid the ripening barley, wheat and rye, brightening all the ground between the far reaching, neatly planted rows of vines, and the less orderly olives. In walled vegetable patches tall white Annunciation lilies disputed the territory with cabbages, flinging, with reckless prodigality, their sweet fragrance towards the train as it rattled past. Three mules, harnessed tandem, drew a top heavy load of hay leisurely along. Small and large villages appeared dotted here and there in the vega. For landmark each had the lofty belfry of its church, about which the houses clustered, irregular, embowered in trees and picturesque. Whether near or far the sentinel hills never once relaxed their vigilance.

The plain rolled on with its shifting designs of vines, olives, corn, poppies and broom. Now and then a river made its way down from the mountains to flow between shallow banks to the glittering blue sea. Women, wearing bright aprons and kerchiefs on their heads, worked in the fields with men in shirts of vivid indigo. Their presence lent yet further colour and animation to the scene.

Gradually stretches of forest appeared, mostly a small variety of pine. At the little station of Flossa an old man in blue wore the large scarlet woollen cap, with a point falling over one ear, once characteristic of the peasantry of Catalonia, but now rarely seen. Out on the plain a small girl was busily engaged in the distracting task of driving a number of fat white and brown geese, and a couple of oxen were stolidly ploughing. Here my carriage was invaded by a couple of men. On entering each wished me "Buenos Dias." Before proceeding to smoke they offered me cigarettes. On leaving, a couple of stations further on, they bade me "Adios" and "Felix Viaje" (happy journey). These formalities constitute an important rule of Spanish etiquette, and add not a little to the amenities of life. It is considered the height of ill breeding not to enter into conversation with one's fellow travellers. The thin-skinned Briton need have no fear of being considered indiscreet. He is expected to

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evinced an interest in the affairs of those with whom he is thrown into temporary proximity. He will do well to enquire whence they come, and whither they are bent. Should they happen to be in black, as is most frequently the case, it is the custom to express sympathy.

Spaniards have a passion for mourning. The death of a fifty-fifth cousin, a dozen times removed, is sufficient to plunge the entire family connection into trappings of the deepest woe. In this respect the men are as punctilious as their feminine belongings. They even go to the length of black studs, scarf pins and links. Fortunately they are content with affecting the externals of grief. Their manner in no way reflects the profound bereavement expressed by the funereal gloom of their apparel.

On walking along the corridor of the train I was surprised to find most of the compartments in darkness, and their occupants asleep. I was yet to learn that the Spaniard's ideal of comfortable travelling is to draw the blinds and pass the time in slumber. He is only roused when the door opens noiselessly from outside. This generally happens when the train is going at top speed. The ticket inspector, agile as a Jack in the Box, puts in a sudden appearance. These unexpected apparitions are disconcerting, particularly at night, and would seem to demand special acrobatic training on the part of those officials called upon to perform the hazardous feat.

Spanish railway carriages differ little from the customary French type. A first class compartment provides seats for six. Each is glorified by a white crochet antimacassar that displays the initials M.Z.A. in capital letters. These are repeated in yellow on the red carpet, and stand for Madrid, Zaragoza, and Alicante. The line between Portbou and Barcelona was the first laid down in Spain.

The train pursued a gradually ascending course through wooded country. The views were picturesque and varied. Emerging from a pine clad defile the rail ran between a river and a fine avenue of spreading planes. As the big irregular city of Gerona came suddenly into sight the first objects to arrest attention were the great cathedral, and a neighbouring church of equally imposing dimensions. The loss of its steeple gave the latter a curiously stunted appearance. High crowded houses were jumbled together in artistic disarray. Roses, many coloured and fragrant, grew riot in the cramped gardens, where tall slender palms thrust their

branches above the grey stones of restricting walls. Over all arched a vast expanse of sky infinitely blue and cloudless.

On the busy station platform a youth was driving a brisk trade with a buffet on wheels. Glad of the opportunity to break my fast I bought an excellent hot omelette, sandwiched in between a substantial roll, for eighty centimos.

In the searching glare of the hot yellow sunshine Gerona looked very old and mediæval. Something in the placidity of its repose was curiously suggestive of the marble sleep of an armoured knight stretched out on his coffin lid. Few cities have a more war-like record. Owing to its strategical position, on the main route from France, it has been subject to numerous sieges, and has figured frequently in treaties. The importance attached to it is emphasised by the fact that the eldest son of the Kings of Aragon bore the title of Prince of Gerona. In 1808 Napoleon's forces made a fatal mistake, when they failed to possess themselves of it, simultaneously with their seizure of Barcelona, and the great fortress of San Fernando, near Figueras, commanding the approach to the Mediterranean pass. Their subsequent attempts to retrieve this initial error cost them dear. Twice Duhesme was obliged to raise the siege and fall back upon Barcelona. On the third occasion the gallant old city held out for eight months, and only capitulated when forced by famine to do so.

For awhile the train traversed pine woods and plantations of poplar. Between the long straight lines of the latter the ground was green with high sturdy bracken. Hostalrich made picturesque appeal from its lofty position on a rampart girdled hill. The towers of its ancient walls are visible from afar. This, however, is an essentially utilitarian age. The builder, untroubled by æsthetic qualms, has not spared the mediæval city. Houses are built into the massive masonry of its battlements. Even so it still manages to look imposingly feudal and romantic. Behind, at a higher level, rises the citadel memorable for a unique episode in the Peninsular War. The French had invested it closely from January 16th until May 12th, 1810. On the latter date, all provisions being exhausted, Colonel Estrade ordered the garrison to make a surprise sortie at night, and cut their way through the enemy's lines. Unfortunately he was wounded and made prisoner, but the majority escaped.

The view is a fine one. Ridge upon ridge of mountains penetrate deep into the blue distance. Red seams in their rugged sides show amid the green of trees. On a remote

peak a grey castle bristles with towers and bastions. In its prime it must have been, practically, impregnable, a stronghold difficult of access even to its friends, and a death trap for its foes.

Near Barcelona the hills dwindle. The approach to the great straggling city is across a flat, and rather featureless plain, sprinkled with large modern villas characterised by brightly coloured roofs of glazed tiling. These flash, with metallic brilliancy, in the sunshine. Other features are miradors, or corner turrets, of which most residences boast one. They are usually capped by high pointed spires of the same dazzling tiles.

In common with the majority of manufacturing towns Barcelona appears at its worst from the railway. The view is ugly, sordid and depressing. Tall factory chimneys foul the clear blue sky with grey and sulphur hued smoke. Untidy piles of masonry litter the sites of projected buildings. The train advances slowly through outskirts crowded with tall houses. Shabby tenement dwellings turn their backs upon the line. From every window hang shirts and other garments. In vain the eye seeks for some beauty spot. Even the splendid spires of the Sagrada Familia, Gaudi's wonderful new church, are marred by disfiguring scaffolding. As a result the stranger is thoroughly disillusioned, and conceives a prejudice against Barcelona which, however, soon wears off.

CHAPTER III

BARCELONA

BARCELONA is the busiest and most cosmopolitan city in Spain. From early morning until far into the night its main thoroughfares are crowded with traffic—electric trams, private motors, taxicabs, carts and a variety of other conveyances. Neat victorias ply for hire at four pesetas an hour. Horses are protected by deep fly nets, edged with fringe of a contrasting colour, which fit closely over the ears and head, and hang down at the sides. Small bells tingle melodiously round the necks of mules, in musical contrast to the harsh hooting of motor horns.

The narrow side walks are perpetually thronged with light hearted, chattering multitudes. Pretty women, in bright dresses, large glittering earrings and the flimsiest of black mantillas, pass gaily along, fan in hand. Seemingly they are unburdened by a care in the world. Their picturesque and eminently becoming veils are a much diminished, and romantic survival of the all enveloping yashmak introduced by the Muhammadan conquerors of Spain. Children, and women of humbler degrees, are generally bareheaded. Apparently they defy the hot sun with impunity. This indifference is attributed to a belief that the rays of the sun are powerless to work harm within sound of the voice of prayer. If true, this tradition may, in a measure, account for the multiplicity of churches and their close proximity.

For some unexplained reason the men appear possessed of less distinctive individuality than the women. Possibly this is due to their taste in dress, which is uniformly sombre, although some display an Oriental liking for jewellery. White straw hats, with black bands and remarkably thick brims, constitute the popular summer wear. Walking sticks are rarely, if ever, carried excepting by elderly men.

Uniforms show up frequently amid the crowds. Conspicuous among them are those of the Guardia Civile, or

Constabulary, a much respected branch of the public service, whose trim grey tunics and trousers are enlivened by the brightest of yellow belts and bandoliers, small black ammunition pouches, silver buttons and scarlet tabs on collar and cuffs. Their arms consist of rifles and revolvers. The hats are extremely curious, almost grotesque, with a decided suggestion of comic opera. Of shiny black leather they are round and close fitting in front. The brim starts at the temples, widens out at the sides, and turns up abruptly against the crown behind, where a white cotton flap, or curtain, hangs down on the shoulders to afford protection from the sun.

The police wear a uniform of bright indigo blue with red markings on the collar and sleeves, black top boots, and a white leather belt, whence a sword hangs on the left side, and a revolver on the right. Their helmets are a modified version of those worn by London firemen, and are decorated in front with the letters C.S., a coat of arms and a crown in silver. Other civil officials are distinguished by scarlet coats. They are mostly Government pensioners, and are posted in squares, and near cross roads to direct strangers, and afford useful local information generally.

The deeply rooted prejudice against trade, inherent in most Spaniards, is not characteristic of the inhabitants of Barcelona. Quite the contrary. The old capital of Catalonia has always been famous for commercial enterprise and maritime adventure. As a great Mediterranean port it is, ipso facto, a much frequented mart of nations. Founded by those intrepid pioneers of international trade, the Phœnicians, it was in turn subjected to Roman, Gothic, Arab and French invader. Throughout their many vicissitudes of fortune the Catalans have maintained a sturdy independence of character, and clung tenaciously to their early principles of justice, liberty and progress. For this reason they have not always been easy to govern.

To a stranger, unacquainted with its past, Barcelona might well appear a modern city, crowded, prosperous, self engrossed and pleasure loving. At first, too, he would find it less typical of Spain than of the South of Europe in general. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, his opinion would change, as he threaded his way through the secret labyrinth of narrow streets, and alleys, penetrating ever deeper amid the ancient houses, until he reached the great Gothic cathedral, dark, resounding and mysterious, built on the site of a Roman temple.

The most frequented part of the town is unquestionably the Ramblas, at once the main street and favourite promenade. Literally translated its name implies a stream, or mountain torrent, and is derived from the brook, which once flowed through the heart of the old walled city. Its bed is now covered by the famous plane avenue. The popular thoroughfare is exceedingly wide. A broad, tree planted walk runs down the middle. This is provided with seats and is reserved for pedestrians. Flanking it are roads outlined by side walks and shops, hotels and cafés. Traffic is required to keep to the right. All day long the little tables on the pavement, outside the many restaurants, are filled with people eager to slake their thirst with coffee, served in tumblers, chocolate, ices, or one of the many sweet, heavily flavoured fruit syrups, for which Spain is noted. Spaniards are essentially a temperate people. During my stay I only once saw a man the worse for drink.

At its southern end the Ramblas starts from the Plaza de la Paz, an open space overlooking the blue water of the well filled harbour. From the centre of the Place of Peace soars the loftiest monument in the city, the splendid pillar of Columbus, or Colon, as the great Genoese is styled by Spaniards. Designed by Cayetano Buhigas it dates from 1882 and consists of a beautiful iron column two hundred feet in height. At the summit a gilt globe supports an erect bronze figure of Christopher Columbus, by Rafael Atche. Four pairs of magnificent bronze lions guard the circular platform at the base, which is ringed about by a hedge of aloes. The lower part of the pillar is decorated with carved panels depicting historical scenes connected with the discovery of America, notably the one in which the navigator is received at Barcelona, by Fernando and Isabella, on his return from his first voyage. These are supplemented by crowns, and those heraldic devices, to which Spanish architects are inordinately addicted. With the exception of his native city of Genoa no place has raised so fine a monument to Columbus.

Between his first visit to the Catholic Kings at Cordova, in April 1486, and his triumphal reception by them in Barcelona, in the spring of 1493, the discoverer had passed through all the vicissitudes of fortune until hope deferred may well have made him heart sick. He had turned with confidence to Portugal, then launched on the full flood of maritime discovery by Henry the Navigator. Here he was unsuccessful.

Proceeding to Spain, in 1484, he addressed himself to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who, however, did nothing for him. He fared better, in the following year, at the hands of the Count of Medina Celi. The latter referred him to the King and Queen at Cordova, where he finally obtained an audience. As a result a royal committee was commanded to meet at Salamanca and enquire into the proposed expedition. Its deliberations lasted until 1490 and terminated with an adverse report. Thoroughly discouraged, and practically at the end of his financial resources, Columbus started for France. On the way he passed the Monastery of La Rabida, where he found an enlightened and enthusiastic listener in Fray Juan Perez, a former confessor of Queen Isabel. This excellent man exerted himself to such good effect that Columbus was recalled to the Court, then encamped at Santa Fe in the plain before Granada. There a royal charter was signed on April 17th, 1491. Columbus was granted the rank of Admiral, a title which was to be hereditary in his family. Furthermore he was appointed Viceroy and Governor-General of all such territory as he should discover.

His little fleet of three caravels sailed from Palos at dawn on August 3rd, 1492. They were worked by sails and oars. The "Santa Maria" was the largest and the only one possessing a deck. Martin Pinzon was pilot. Land was first sighted at the Bahamas on October 11th, and was named San Salvador. The north of Cuba was reached on October 28th. From there Columbus sailed south-east and so made Haiti, which he called Espanola, or Little Spain. Here the "Santa Maria" ran aground on Christmas Day. Ultimately he returned to Palos on March 15th, 1493, and proceeded to report to the King and Queen at Barcelona. He was accorded a great reception and loaded with honours. This was the happiest period of his life. Well for him had his career terminated at that moment.

Ferdinand and Isabella lost no time in seeking to secure the fullest possible benefit from the expedition. In April they obtained a bull from Pope Alexander VI granting Spain exclusive possession of all lands discovered in the West towards the Indies. This was considered too vague by Columbus, who urged that a demarcation line might be drawn, which should leave no room for dispute with the Portuguese. Eventually a treaty between Spain and Portugal was signed at Tordesillas, on June 7th, 1494, which provided that the line, defining their distinctive spheres of influence,

should be drawn 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Everything beyond that was to belong to Spain. All to east of it was to be Portugal's share. This arrangement ultimately secured Brazil for the latter country, as the line touched the northern coast of South America immediately east of the Amazon River. By this same reckoning the Philippines should also have gone to Portugal.

To left and right of the Plaza de la Paz stretch broad roads planted with dusty palms. On the west rises the green eminence of Montjuich crowned by a fortress said to provide accommodation for ten thousand men. This was captured by an English force, under Lord Peterborough, in 1705. The French possessed themselves of it, by means of a trick, on February 29th, 1808.

At the south western corner of the Ramblas, looking towards the column of Columbus, stands the barracks known as the Quartel de Atarazanas, a plain three storeyed building with no architectural feature of note. Here James I of Aragon, popularly styled the Conqueror, erected a fortress in the thirteenth century. Tradition avers that in its courtyard Ferdinand and Isabella received Columbus upon his return from discovering America.

Continuing along the left side of the Ramblas the Calle de la Santa Madonna is quickly reached, a short street lined by a row of stalls entirely devoted to second hand books. It takes its name from the neighbouring church.

On the evening of my arrival the throng in the Ramblas was so dense as to make progress a matter of elbowing one's way through. Motor cars and victorias kept passing and repassing in constant procession. Brilliantly coloured Manila shawls, embroidered with flowers and edged with deep fringe, were draped across the backs of carriages filled with gaily painted ladies resplendent in white lace mantillas, effectively draped above great tortoiseshell combs. Pink, red and yellow roses were pinned into their dark hair. Others, again, wore round deep crowned hats of black felt poised at a rakish angle. I was informed that a bull fight had taken place that afternoon, hence the gala dresses, the crowds and general animation.

It is a curious anomaly that twentieth century Spain should view, with ever increasing enthusiasm, a spectacle suppressed in the eighteenth as cruel, barbarous and demoralising. Under Charles IV bull fighting was prohibited. Nothing of the kind took place for a number of years and,

probably, never would have again, but for the French invasion in 1808. Napoleon's nomination of his brother, Joseph, to the Spanish throne, was thoroughly unwelcome, particularly as the nation was, at that moment, suffering from an embarrassing superfluity of monarchs in the persons of King Charles IV, and his son King Fernando VII. Under these circumstances King Joseph felt it incumbent upon him to make a determined bid for popular favour. He could hit upon no happier means than the revival of bull fighting.

The most fashionable and, incidentally, the most expensive shops are to be found in the Calle Fernando VII, a turning to right off the Ramblas. Failing to see the name marked up I enquired of a passer by whether I were in the right street? To my surprise he merely pointed to the ground. Looking down I was rather startled to perceive the words "Calle Fernando" deeply cut in the stone pavement. The innovation impressed me more from its novelty than from any improvement upon familiar methods. It was here that I entered a Spanish church for the first time.

Outside was heat, and glare and the din of traffic. The hot afternoon sun beat upon the narrow business thoroughfare with almost dazzling brilliancy. As I stepped through the heavy swinging doors into the cool dark silence of the old sanctuary, I seemed to have passed to another sphere, an obscure realm of shadows. The air was laden with incense and the stifled fragrance of imprisoned flowers. As my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom I made out a great crucifix in a shrine to left of the entrance. The tortured figure on the cross expressed that intensity of suffering, which seems a peculiar gift of Spanish artists. It almost appears as though they derive a cruel pleasure from depicting pain, so skilled are they in simulating all its phases of strained muscle and quivering nerve.

The dim light of the flickering candles shone upon the silver feet of the figure. All around hung numerous small models of legs in wax, marble and plaster, thankofferings for cures wrought in answer to prayer. Even as I stood there a veiled woman rose from her knees. Reaching upward she touched the right ankle of the Saviour, then crossed herself and stepped into the all engulfing blackness, which instantly swallowed her up.

Afterwards it seemed particularly appropriate to learn that the first church, I happened to enter in Spain, was dedicated to Sant Iago, the great national saint. In no other country

has a patron saint played so important a role. But for Sant Iago Spain would, in all probability, still be a Muhammadan power, a second Turkey on the confines of Europe. Islam would have held the eastern and western gates of the Mediterranean, and the history of civilisation would have been written differently.

The marvellous tale opens in the ninth century. At that epoch most of the peninsula was under Arab rule. Those Christians, who refused to submit, clung to the fringe of their erstwhile territories. Through all their trials of faith they cherished a tradition that the Apostle James, had come as a missionary to their shores. The little band of patriots included the celebrated hermit Pelayo, who dwelt near the ruined port of Iria Flavia, in Galicia. From his retreat the holy man repeatedly saw lights flickering above a waste of grass and bush. Greatly exercised by the phenomenon he reported it to Theodomiro, the Bishop, who ordered the mystery to be investigated. Digging operations brought to light a marble sarcophagus of unusual form. The body contained therein was instantly acclaimed as that of James. His fellow disciples were credited with having secretly conveyed his remains to Joppa, and there placed them in a barque, which had been divinely guided to the remote spot, where supernatural agency had led to their discovery some eight hundred years later.

The find created an immense sensation. King Alfonso II at once proceeded thither. He granted the site for a church, and endowed it with all the surrounding land within a radius of three miles. St. James became patron saint of the Iberian peninsula, and his shrine the Mecca of Spanish pilgrimage. In his honour the name of the district was changed from Iria Flavia to Padron. Soon his church amassed such wealth as to offer a tempting prize to the hordes of Danish and Scandinavian pirates, who were the terror of the coast. Accordingly Don Ramiro caused the sarcophagus to be transferred inland to Campostella. A new church was built and richly endowed. From every acre of wheat under cultivation one bushel was assigned it as annual tribute. Sant Iago was further allotted a share of all spoils of war. His name was borne by the second of the three great military orders of Spanish knighthood. Their special duty was to safeguard pilgrims to the shrine, a task which had, at first, devolved upon the neighbouring monks of St. Augustin. The cross and the lizard were selected as emblems of the saint.

Pilgrims to Campostella further adopted the scallop shell as badge in emulation of those more adventurous Christians, whose religious zeal caused them to penetrate to the Holy Sepulchre, in Palestine.

Sant Iago was not ungrateful for all this devotion. Mounted on a white charger he headed his faithful followers in many an onslaught upon the infidels. His name was their battle cry and inspired prodigies of valour. Moreover the fact that his sacred remains were entrusted to them, for safe keeping, invested each fresh expedition against the Moors with the sanctity of a crusade.

The Calle Fernando ends at the Plaza de la Constitucion, a large square overlooked by the Casa de la Deputacion on the left, and the Casa de la Ciudad, or Town Hall, on the right. The latter is a large three storeyed edifice of smooth grey stone, and dates from the fourteenth century. The centre of the façade is pierced by a narrow arched doorway flanked by niches containing marble statues of James the Conqueror, and the noted Councillor, Juan Fivaller II. Within is a narrow cobble paved patio, or courtyard, the encircling roofs bristling with ancient gargoyles. Beyond again a fine staircase leads up to the Salon de Ciente, a magnificent council chamber measuring ninety feet by forty. The remarkable arched ceiling is forty-five feet high, and is richly painted and gilt. Stained glass, in the softest and most mellow shades, fills the rose windows lining the side walls. The floor is paved with grey marble. Twisted stone columns flank the portal, which is further ornamented with a profusion of heraldic devices. At the far end of the hall a crimson canopy hangs above a portrait of Maria Christina, the Queen Mother, who acted as Regent during the long minority of Alfonso XIII. The Gothic gallery, outside the council chamber, displays some noteworthy ajimez windows, the Moorish name applied to casements characterised by double arches divided by central colonettes. The ancient wooden ceiling glows with colour and gilding. It was an act of sheer vandalism to pierce it for—oh! profanity—a modern lift.

On the other side of the square stands the Casa de la Deputacion erected in the fifteenth century. A dragon, in the act of being slain by St. George, patron saint of Catalonia, figures above the central door, to left and right of which are lamps topped by crowns. The entrance hall is divided by arches supported by square stone pillars. Bronze lions guard the grand staircase. Above is a court open to the sky.

Here the carvings are extraordinary, and display an unrivalled wealth of imagination. The most grotesque of gargoyles thrust their gaping heads out from the encircling upper storey. One portrays a baboon picking its teeth. Still more fantastical are the figures adorning the corner staircase. Fluted arches spring from the most delicate and fragile of pillars. Each scallop is joined to the next by the graven head of monk or nun, with a solitary exception in the shape of a bearded and beturbaned Moor.

The court opens into a second, surely the most beautiful and romantic roof garden ever devised. Here the pavement is of white marble. In the centre a fountain plays into an octagonal basin fringed with the white and gold and green of arum lilies, in red pots. Orange trees hang out their fruit, bright as yellow lanterns, above flower beds gay with the many colours of sweet pea, bachelor's buttons and roses. The fair and secret pleasance is looked down upon by long, thin necked gargoyles, survivals in stone of the Gothic age. The monstrous nightmare faces leer, grin and frown, in turn, as though at some strange pageant invisible to all but their petrified stare. Suddenly the perfumed silence of the hot May afternoon is shattered by the loud booming of bells. The still air quivers at the sound. The prelude ended, the clock, in the mediæval turret, thunders forth five resounding strokes. Simultaneously the sun slips over yet a little further to the west.

Unsavoury odours pervaded the narrow alley, up which I wended my way to the Cathedral. High five storeyed houses rose at either side almost shutting out the blue of the sky. Underfoot the irregular cobble stones made walking a penance. Fortunately the distance was short. Very soon I emerged at the Calle de los Condes de Barcelona. Here I caught a restricted glimpse of the marvellous old brown stone sanctuary, with its buttresses, projecting gargoyles—one of them an elephant with a howdah on its back—many windows and confused wealth of sculptured detail. Buildings crowded close up leaving merely a passage under the walls, hence a very cramped view.

I do not know what impression Barcelona's great cathedral makes upon other people. Possibly those already familiar with the Gothic masterpieces of Burgos, Leon and Toledo may accept its incredible wealth of ornament, and multiplication of sculptured detail as matters of little surprise. To me, who had never seen anything of the kind before, it seemed

one of the most wonderful and baffling buildings in the world. At first the architectural design of the interior was so strange as to be incomprehensible. Even ripened acquaintance never lessened the sense of mystery underlying its dark and solemn beauty.

My first visit was late in the afternoon. The sun shone full upon the steep stone steps and splendid north-western door, with its pointed arches, fine rose window and carved multitude of Saints, Apostles and angel host.

Above the elaborate façade tapers a lofty Gothic spire flanked by twin towers topped by slender perforated lanterns. Although begun as long ago as 1298 the cathedral was not finished, when seen by Laborde early in the nineteenth century. He complained of the unfinished state of the main entrance, although, for over three hundred years, the Ecclesiastical Court had imposed a duty upon marriage licences for the express purpose of completing it.

A group of beggars,—old men and old women, the latter wearing black shawls on their heads—are always to be found clustered about the door. The interior is very dark. Immediately inside a faint many coloured twilight filters through the windows of an octagonal dome, to flood the stone floor with pools of richest crimson, purple, emerald, royal blue and gold. The illumination is but a transitory gleam, a reflection of the glory of the setting sun, and intensifies the gloom of the prevailing shadows. Exactly opposite the door rises the choir, or coro. As in all ancient Spanish cathedrals it is completely walled in. The result is that the congregation is excluded from participating in the service, whence springs the impression that the clergy of old considered themselves, rather than the general public, when planning their churches. The exterior of the choir is of yellow marble to a height of about five feet. Thereafter it extends upwards in white marble decorated with small columns and sculptured scenes and figures, one of which depicts the crucifixion of St. Andrew. The interior is lined with elaborately carved wooden stalls. These display the armorial bearings of those knights present at a chapter of the Golden Fleece held in the cathedral, in 1509, by the Emperor Charles V. (Charles V of Austria and I of Spain).

The magnificent reredos, above the high altar, is of wood, and dates from the fifteenth century. Below it a sarcophagus contains the body of St. Severus. Here, nightly, priests and choristers repair in solemn procession from the coro to

complete the evening service. Each carries a tall lighted taper. The effect of the gleaming gold and rich hues of the vestments, the scarlet and white of the choir boys, and the yellow glow of long rows of candles, trooping through the gloom, is most fantastical and dream-like. Underneath is the vast crypt designed by Jaime Fabre, the architect from Majorca, who laid the foundations of the cathedral. It contains the tomb of St. Eulalia, who suffered martyrdom in 309 by order of Dacian. The beautiful white marble sarcophagus is adorned with scenes from her life. It originally reposed in the old church of Santa Maria del Mar, whence it was transferred to its resting place in the cathedral in 1339. The occasion was accounted of such significance that two kings, three queens and four princesses participated. Thereafter it became customary with Spanish sovereigns to pass a night in prayer before her shrine.

The side chapels of the Cathedral are extraordinarily rich and varied. Particularly splendid is the one to right of the main door on entering. This is dedicated to San Olegario, who is depicted, in alabaster, in his bishop's robes and mitre solemnly stretched on his coffin lid. The yellow flare of innumerable candles always illuminates the black shadows of the shrine in the ambulatory behind the high altar. Worshipers kneel in little groups on the pavement before a dark figure of Christ on the cross. This is the miracle working Santo Cristo de Lepanto carried by Don John of Austria, natural son of the Emperor Charles V, in his flagship at the celebrated victory over the Turks at Lepanto, on October 6th, 1571. After this signal success the prestige of the Spanish fleet held Europe in awe, until the destruction of the Armada, off the British Isles, in 1588.

Still the black Christ of Lepanto continues to attract countless worshippers, who keep the air about his shrine sweet with the breath of country flowers, simple bunches of broom, homely clusters of roses, carnations and other blooms tied about with grass.

[A grimly significant reminder of Muhammadan days hangs from the organ, above the lofty arch of the doorway, to left of the high altar. This is an immense turbaned head of a Moor, with staring eyes and a flowing black beard, of real hair, nearly a yard in length. From contemplation of this fearsome object it is pleasant to pass out into the old world seclusion of the great echoing cloister, possibly the most charming spot in all Barcelona. Here, for a brief spell, it is

possible to recapture the atmosphere of the Middle Ages. Time has trod with lingering footfall over the deeply cut inscriptions, and elaborate armorial bearings of the tombstones paving the lofty grey stone arcades. Side chapels line the walls. In the centre slumbers an ancient garden of green palms, golden sunshine and azure sky, watched over by peering gargoyles. At the further end a fountain plays above mossy boulders into a tank, where the placid water is the restful hue of jade. Here, in Hare's time, stood the small bronze figure of a knight on horseback, the valiant Vilardell famed as having slain the dragon which the Moors, by means of black magic, let loose upon the Christians. In the moment of triumph Vilardell so far forgot the modesty befitting a true knight as to cry aloud in self praise. The boast cost him dear. No sooner was it uttered than a drop of the dragon's blood splashed on his arm and killed him, a punishment which, judged by twentieth century standards, would seem to more than fit the crime. Now both knight and charger have vanished, but the canons' fat white geese still waddle cackling round the Fuente de las Ocas, as they have done since the cathedral was founded. Occasionally, through an opening door, float the sonorous tones of the great organ, or the solemn beautiful chanting of the priests, who are remarkable for their fine and well trained voices.

To west, the Archbishop's Palace occupies the corner of the street known, in consequence, as the Calle del Obispo. The antiquity of the site is proved by the prevalence of Roman remains. It is a large and imposing stone edifice, and dates from the time when the church was the most formidable power in Spain. At that epoch a bishop's palace was required to be literally, as well as figuratively, a stronghold of the faith. As such it generally included a prison within its boundaries, over which no secular authority was exercised prior to 1790.

Entrance to the Calle del Obispo is guarded by one of the most interesting and significant remains in Barcelona, namely the old Roman gate. The narrow passage is flanked by two round towers, their base composed of great blocks of stone, through the crevices of which weeds thrust their green blades with decorative effect. These are the Roman foundations. Above, the bastions are carried up several storeys in small brick shaped stone, said to be the work of the Goths. The massive walls are pierced by irregular windows surmounted, in characteristic Spanish fashion, by coats of arms.

Running east from the cathedral a passage, known as the

Bajado de Santa Clara, descends to the Plaza del Rey, originally the central courtyard of the Palace built by the Counts of Barcelona, a title afterwards merged in that of King of Aragon. Cobble stones pave the peaceful old world quadrangle, that once echoed to the footfalls of monarchs in armour. One of the greatest of them, John II, died in the adjoining palace, in 1479, leaving to his son, Fernando, the glorious task of uniting the crowns of Aragon and Castile. Shade is afforded by white blossomed acacia trees. Children play around the ancient spire crowned fountain in the middle, undeterred by the four somewhat grim, if crumbling griffins. Near by rises the Pillar of Hercules, a tall slender column surmounted by a capital of the familiar Corinthian order. It is one of the oldest monuments in Barcelona, having formed part of the great Temple of Hercules built in the imperial days of Roman rule. Many coloured stockings and undergarments hang in the sunlight on a clothes line stretched across a corner of the one time royal courtyard.

In the north-eastern angle stands the Capilla Real de Santa Agueda conspicuous for the brilliant colour and rich gilding of its ceiling. This chapel, where kings of old worshipped, dates from the thirteenth century, and is now converted into a museum, with the result that the walls and floor are cumbered with a heterogeneous collection of stone coffins, Roman remains, sculptured fragments of different periods, and paintings on wood.

In the opposite corner of the quadrangle is the old chapel of Santa Clara. The interior, lavishly adorned with gilding, is but faintly discernible in the dim religious light. No warming ray of sunshine penetrates the thickness of the ancient walls. The damp musty atmosphere strikes a sudden chill on the warmest of days. There is a deathlike suggestion in the heavy fragrance of the lilies on the candle illuminated altar. With a feeling of relief I stepped out into the hot radiance of the court again, passing between a row of elderly beggars, seated on the steps of the chapel, contentedly munching their frugal meal of bread and potatoes, washed down by water from the fountain, for which purpose each old woman carries a tin cup.

According to Laborde the Academy of Medicine was housed in the palace at the beginning of last century, as were the court and prison of the Inquisition. Long before then the power of the latter had waned, in proof of which the last *auto da fé*, ever held in Spain, took place in 1680 during the reign

of Charles II. Even at the height of its activity the Inquisition was never so formidable in the kingdom of Aragon as elsewhere in the peninsula. When introduced, by Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1480, Castile soon submitted to the establishment of twelve courts. Aragon, however, resisted to such good effect as never to be troubled with more than four. Even so the opposition was so fierce that the first Inquisitor of Aragon, Pedro D'Arhuez, was assassinated in front of the altar at Saragossa.

In the beginning all the offices of the Inquisition were filled by monks, more especially Dominicans. The greatest secrecy enveloped the whole proceedings until the last dread act, when the black robed victim was led out to suffer a fearful death at the stake.

Now the major portion of what remains of the palace is converted into a repository for the crown archives. Entrance is through an arched doorway in the Calle de los Condes de Barcelona. From here the royal residence appears a great square mansion flanked by corner towers. Immediately inside is a small stone paved patio, or court surrounded by upper and lower galleries. In one corner of the quadrangle an immense vine, said to be a hundred and eighty years old, stretches out all embracing branches. These climb from tier to tier until they reach the roof, clothing arcades and sculptured columns with radiant green.

A wide stone staircase leads up beneath a lofty and magnificent ceiling of carved wood, now blackened by age but once brilliant with glowing colour and gold. Here I surprised a picturesque scene suggestive of old romance. A girl was leaning forward from a wonderfully carved balcony perched at a dizzy height under the ancient ceiling. She was flirting with a soldier standing on the steps some four storeys below. Doubtless, in the days of chivalry, some fair lady of the Court dallied on that selfsame balcony, while a gallant knight regaled her with a song of love told to the languishing strains of a guitar. Possibly he stood on the very step now occupied by the amorous soldier. Probably some Spanish "Peeping Tom" watched slyly, the while, from one of the diminutive casements looking down on the grand staircase.

Room after room is filled with archives. All are neatly ranged in rows. Great tomes and rolls of parchment succeed one another in seemingly endless succession. Long and elaborately executed genealogical trees hang in frames on the wall, among them that of Fernando VII, deposed and

imprisoned by Napoleon in 1808, and restored to the Spanish throne on March 24th, 1814. The Latin records include some splendidly illuminated works dealing with the domestic affairs of the royal house. One brilliant page illustrates the marriage of Queen Petronilla to Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, to whom she was betrothed while yet in her cradle. Their union resulted in that of Aragon and Catalonia, a noteworthy step towards the unification of Spain. Moorish seals, in scarlet wax, display a warrior in armour on the face, and, on the reverse, his name and titles. Old Arabic documents in plenty and maps, seem to bring the far off legendary age of Muhammadan rule strangely near, and invest it with new significance.

Many flights of steep stone stairs lead to the top of a tower, whence a vast panorama stretches out on all sides bounded only by the green amphitheatre of hills, and the dazzling blue of the Mediterranean. Below stretch the flat roofs of Barcelona, each a drying ground for clothes. It would appear that, for the inhabitants of the Catalonian capital, the year consists of three hundred and sixty-five washing days. Immediately underneath lies the Cathedral, with its twin octagonal belfries and three spires.

To east rise the tall slender towers of Our Lady of the Sea. The eye travels thence to rest enquiringly upon the row of four lofty spires soaring above the Church of the Holy Family, surely the most ambitious edifice ever conceived. Gaudi, the architect, is a native of Catalonia. He has a horror of straight lines and angles. With him everything must be curved. His prodigious sanctuary exemplifies this principle to a marked extent. It is to possess thirteen doors, one for each of the sacraments, and sixteen colossal spires, their form inspired by the extraordinary cone like pinnacles of Montserrat.

So far five million pesetas have been spent by the Society of Spanish Devotees of St. Joseph, who intend the church as an expiatory offering for the sins of the nation. The crypt is finished and the northern door, dedicated to the Nativity, is nearing completion. Unfortunately the work languishes for want of funds. Only twenty-five masons are employed upon it, whereas it would require a thousand men, labouring daily for thirty-five years, to complete it. When that happens it will be the most marvellous modern edifice in the world. The carvings are very rich and florid. Gaudi treats stone as though it were ivory and proceeds to cover the entire surface

with symbolical decoration. Seemingly a grotto suggested the northern door. The great pillar, at either side, rests upon a tortoise, emblem of resistance. From the arch above twinkle all the heavenly bodies present at the Nativity. Just now the general effect is too overloaded. Time, with its mellowing touch, will remedy this defect. A thousand years hence Gaudi's twentieth century masterpiece should be at once the joy and despair of archæologists.

Everywhere towers and spires stab the blue sky. Variety is lent by domes and the rounded outlines of Barcelona's two monster arenas, where bull fights are held on Sunday afternoons, and on special festivals. None the less the general impression, made upon the mind by the widespread vista of roofs, is disappointing. The scene looks shabby and sordid. Architecture will require to be revolutionised if cities are to appear to advantage from above. Builders will have to adopt the point of view of the Chinese, whose main concern, when designing their edifices, is to provide the Gods with a pleasing coup d'œil.

CHAPTER IV

TIBIDABO AND MONTSERRAT

AFTER much soul searching I have arrived at the conclusion that it needs a peculiar mentality to appreciate the attractions of a popular tripper resort. This, no doubt, explains why I was not as favourably impressed by the artificial charms of Tibidabo, as would have been the case had I possessed the requisite temperament. The natural advantages of the site are so great that the intrusion of civilisation, as expressed by overhead rails, skating rinks, bandstands, telescopes and the last word in restaurants, moves the traveller,—as distinct from the tourist,—to echo Heber's lament: "Every prospect pleases and only man is vile."

It was a little past 7 a.m. when I started for Tibidabo, the highest point of the range to north-west of Barcelona. Electric trams run out to the foot of the mountain, whence the journey is continued upwards by funicular railway. At that early hour the Ramblas presented a gay and animated scene. The northern end of the famous plane avenue was lined with flower stalls. Masses of feathery white and green gypsophile clustered about brilliantly coloured blooms, which emitted an almost intoxicating fragrance in the hot morning sunshine. Further on the big trees cast their green shadows over the bird market. Beyond lay the great Plaseo de Catalunya, a vast palm planted square leading to the new quarter of the city. A little more and the tram entered the Paseo de Gracia, a truly imposing thoroughfare composed of two wide avenues of plane trees, divided by a broad road and flanked by streets. To left and right stretched big blocks of handsome new buildings. The ground floors were occupied by fashionable shops and the upper storeys by flats. An ornamental balcony projected from every window. Many of the roofs were of brighty coloured, and highly glazed tiles, in such startling combinations as lemon yellow and

brilliant orange. On the whole the architectural style was almost too florid and exuberant. It bordered on the vulgar. The eye was sated with the orgy of decoration. One large mansion, in particular, arrested attention. Seemingly the architect had gone for inspiration to the cave dwellings of our remote ancestors. His strange building appeared to be hewn out of the light brown face of a sandstone cliff. Iron, twisted and tortured into the green semblance of cactus, wild grass and the jagged saw-like blades of aloes, formed the most fantastical of balconies in front of each curious casement. Noting my astonishment a fellow passenger volunteered the information that Gaudi had drawn the design of this weird art nouveau block of flats. Lofty though it was he assured me that it contained no stairs. Their place was taken by a gently ascending ramp. True to Gaudi's principles there was not an angle in the entire building.

The tram stopped frequently. The driver and conductor wore neat uniforms of drab corduroy with peaked caps, to match, banded with dark grey and a double line of silver braid. Printed exhortations as to conduct were prominently displayed. Passengers were urged to behave properly upon all occasions. They were cautioned not to offend against religion, morality or customary usage, but to observe the rules of decency and culture. Blasphemy was strictly prohibited. Any breach of the kind would be punished with a fine of five pesetas plus a day's detention.

The tram entered narrow ascending roads, up which it swayed, and bumped past pedestrians heavily laden on their way homeward from market. One old gentleman carried a loudly protesting pair of chickens firmly gripped by the legs. It was pretty out in the suburbs. Trees lined the route. The houses were very bright, with their roofs of vivid tiles, and balconies adorned with iron work, statues and a glowing wealth of geraniums. Roses climbed up the walls, and the gardens were green with palms. Over all spread a vast sky blue as a flawless turquoise.

At last the car stopped at the foot of a wide road lined with acacia trees. Here I was told to exchange into another painted a bright shade of azure. Every window was shut and it was uncomfortably crowded. The women, who had no protection from the sun but their heavy mass of glossy hair, fanned themselves vigorously. Many of the prettiest lips were darkened by an unmistakable moustache. All talked incessantly at the top of their voices. The men were,

if possible, even more loquacious than the women. Ahead stretched the steep height of Tibidabo, its green sides ablaze with yellow broom. A halt was called at the little station at the foot of the funicular railway. The return fare (*classe de luxe*) is four pesetas.

The ascent was made very slowly. The train seemed to crawl, fly-like, up the precipitous face of the cliff between rocky banks aglow with wild flowers, vivid pink geraniums, tall purple thistles, honeysuckle and eglantine. The hot air was redolent of their perfume and that of the dark pines covering the hillside.

On emerging from the station, at the top, the stranger is taken aback to find himself confronted by a number of buildings, which might have been transported, en bloc, from the heart of the town. Crowded in among them is the brilliant tiled façade of the unfinished church of the Sacred Heart, a florid edifice of light hued stone. Two steep flights of steps lead between palms, and trees in pots, to the striking doorway, its arch decorated with a mass of carved figures, below a vividly coloured representation of the crucified Christ, at the foot of the throne of the Almighty. This scene is executed in glazed tiling, a method whereby architectural effect is instantly obtained. The interior displays six rows of arches, and a splendid central altar, of sculptured white marble, and that heavily gilt metal work characteristic of Spanish shrines. Among the side chapels one is consecrated to the famous black Madonna of Montserrat. The figure stands out against a mosaic background depicting the world celebrated monastery.

Behind, on the hill top, stands the handsome red tower erected by the city water works. It is a familiar landmark to the country around. Viewed from here the panorama is vast and imposing. Far below the city sprawls across the plain to the very edge of the Mediterranean. It is lightly veiled by a shimmering haze of heat and smoke. The tideless sea rolls in a smooth blue sheet to the horizon. The currents below its placid surface seem so many veins of hidden sapphire.

A dusty and deeply rutted road winds round the mountain to plunge into pinewoods carpeted with wild flowers. The tinkle of bells mingles with the twittering of invisible birds, as five straining mules, harnessed tandem to a heavily loaded cart, struggle into sight. All the while their driver heaps abuse upon them at the top of his voice. Nearby, on the garden wall of a solitary kiosk, a snow-white peacock preens his outspread tail in the golden sunshine.

Unfortunately the summit of Tibidabo is rapidly being built over by hideous modern edifices. In place of broom and pines the ground is paved, at much expense, with cement. Here iron chairs and benches are set instead of those rustic seats, which taste would suggest as appropriate. An aerial railway performs a perilous series of evolutions above the brink of the precipice, and a long line of glaring up-to-date cafés stand where an old world fonda would refresh mind and body alike. When will long suffering humanity rise in revolt against this universal desecrating of Nature's beauty spots?

The train for Montserrat leaves the Estacion del Norte at 8 a.m. On the way thither I caught sight of a large motor bus marked "Montserrat." It was standing near the beautiful Arco de Trionfo, a tall red brick gateway pierced by a rounded opening. Small domes, topped by crowns, decorated the corners, and the frieze was of light brown stone carved with allegorical figures. The result was a combination of Moorish and Roman styles rarely seen excepting in Spain, where the most surprising architectural blends find favour. On enquiry I found that the motor bus was due to start at 7.40 and that the fare was eight pesetas. I immediately decided to travel by it in preference to the train.

There were two benches on the roof, which was not protected by a rail. The driver produced a ladder up which I scrambled. Some half dozen more passengers collected, but they all elected to travel inside. We went at a good pace. I soon regretted my exposed perch. The sun was uncomfortably hot, and the heavy car bumped and lurched over the many inequalities of the road. Within half an hour we were out in the country. The route was inches thick in dust and lined by acacias and young planes. Suddenly the driver pulled up sharply to allow a couple of shepherds to collect their scattered flock, which had fled panicstricken at our approach. A little further on he only stopped just in time to avoid a collision, at a sharp corner. We were going downhill and were met by a string of carts loaded with stones. The foremost was drawn by three miserable mules harnessed tandem. It drew up across the route barring our passage. Much angry recrimination followed. Spaniards invariably use their tongues in preference to their hands. A quarter of an hour had been wasted in this way, when I took it upon myself to intervene. The gift of a few coppers, at first refused with a grand gesture, induced the owner of one of the carts,

in the rear, to bring his horse forward to the assistance of the struggling mules. Soon the entire string had creaked and groaned past leaving us free to pursue our journey.

After this I took my seat inside. Gradually the bus filled up. Each village contributed a passenger, or two. All were given a great send off by their friends and relatives. There was much embracing, and even a few tears ere the country women, and their bundles, were finally deposited inside. The men, with the exception of three priests, wore long dust coats of unbleached cotton. This was my first meeting with country people and I was struck by their vivacity and refinement. I was also impressed by the friendly relations which existed between them and the clergy. They laughed and joked together without the least restraint. The women joined freely in the general chatter led by a handsome girl, who wore a wedding ring, but did not look more than sixteen. Her beauty was of unmistakably Moorish type; the face of a pronounced oval, the lips well formed and of a rich red over exceedingly white teeth, the nose aquiline and the eyes long, dark and glittering. The pearly whiteness of her complexion contrasted sharply with the raven black of crisply waving hair. Her beauty was of too severe and masculine an order to be wholly pleasing. Alone of the women she wore a mantilla. She looked as much out of place among them as an eaglet in the midst of sparrows.

The main streets of the villages were so narrow that the bus was only just able to pass. The country was well cultivated with vines, olives, grain and onions. Everywhere the scarlet of poppies flamed amid the prevailing green. As the bus began its winding ascent to the mountains the panorama expanded. Far below stretched the vast red plain sparingly dotted with brown roofed houses. Across it the muddy Llobregat pursued its circuitous course towards the glistening blue of the distant Mediterranean. There was a brief wait at Monistrol, a village of tall dwellings overhanging the river, and another at a railway crossing nearby. Here there was a rush to the window to throw coins to a dog, tricked out in gaudy red and yellow finery, which sat up on its hind legs and begged, while its master waved a small red flag.

The steep road climbed beyond the last venturesome olive tree to the realm of pines. Frequently the car was compelled to draw up quickly, on the very edge of a dizzy drop, for a mule cart to pass. At last it made its final halt in front of the little railway station at Montserrat, situated at the foot of a

precipitous pine clad height. From here the brief distance to the celebrated monastery must be traversed on foot.

The domain of the monks is entered through a tall gateway under the frowning face of a cliff. A short steep road leads thence to a great open space in front of the old red pile, in which the Benedictine Order have dispensed hospitality to all comers for more than a thousand years. Shaking off the hotel touts, who swarm around a foreigner as tenaciously as flies about a honey pot, I turned a deaf ear to their oft reiterated assurance that there was no accommodation available in the monastery. A black veiled pilgrim directed me to a door on the left. Here I found a gloomy stone paved hall. A long line of waiting women and children stood in front of a small window, very similar to that of a booking office at a railway station. When my turn came I was given a slip of paper and two large keys, each of which was labelled with the number seven. I was then directed to present myself at a neighbouring window. There I was handed two coarse sheets, a pillow case and a rough towel. Thus equipped I followed a blue clad man servant to the white washed cell allotted me on the second floor. Despite its austerity it was a cheerful apartment thanks to the sunlight, which streamed in through the wide open window. The furniture consisted of a couple of small iron beds, a diminutive washstand and a picture of Our Lord. To my surprise there was electric light. A notice on the door stated that the charge for occupying the room was four pesetas a night. Should the visitor desire to prolong his stay, beyond the customary three days, special permission would have to be obtained. The view was a fine one and embraced the plane planted cloister overlooked, on three sides, by the high red walls of the monastery, which is five storeyed. On the fourth towered the wonderful grey cone shaped peaks of Montserrat, their lower reaches sparingly clad with the dark green of pines. As I stood looking down at the ruined arcades of the ancient quadrangle, the clock in the belfry struck twelve. Simultaneously I realised that I had breakfasted frugally off a cup of coffee and a roll, in Barcelona, at 7 a.m.

Visitors to the Monastery must provide their own food. Consequently I bent my steps—very unwillingly be it confessed—in the direction of the hotel.

I had come to Montserrat possessed of the illusion that the monks furnished their guests with board as well as bed. My fancy had pictured a sombre vaulted refectory, lofty and echoing, lined with long wooden tables on trestles, neighbourly

benches and silent footed lay brothers. In anticipation I had relished a homely and appetising meal of vegetable soup, fish and fruit, washed down by a bottle of sour red wine. How different was the reality to this pleasant dream of old world hospitality.

In place of a country fonda I found an hotel, which prided itself upon being up to date. The white marble staircase was carpeted with scarlet pile. This led to a fashionable restaurant of the approved "de luxe" type. Three rooms opened one out of the other in a dazzling vista of small tables and tail coated, white shirted waiters of the correct city pattern. The place was crowded with hatless ladies, in high tortoiseshell combs and black mantillas, accompanied by little girls in long white frocks, wreaths of white roses and white veils. These miniature brides were celebrating their first communion, and seemed oppressed by the importance of the occasion.

It was a typical Spanish lunch, the dishes generously flavoured with garlic. Eggs were followed by meat. Then came fish and more meat succeeded by the national dish of French beans cooked whole in oil. Finally the menu concluded with cheese and fruit. The price charged was nine pesetas. Wine was an extra and dear in proportion. The whole thing was incongruous and absurd.

It was a relief to escape from the vulgar modernity of the restaurant, and wander uphill to the monastery built on a shallow ledge of the precipitous side of the cliff. Humboldt graphically expressed its unique situation: "It seems," said he, "as though the mountain had opened in order to receive men into its heart." The scene is one of wild grandeur. The rocky pine clad heights are surmounted by extraordinary grey peaks, seemingly petrified icicles, or monster stalactites. The remoteness of the site, the difficulty of access and the magnificence of the surroundings rendered it an ideal retreat for ascetics. This explains how, in the early ages of Christianity, a small group of hermits withdrew thither, and took the vow never to leave it. In the year of Our Lord 880 mystery was added to the romantic attractions of the site.

Three children were tending cattle on the hill side, when they were surprised by a brilliant light, which suddenly shone out from a particular spot. They summoned their parents, who were equally amazed by the marvel. The news was borne to the Bishop of Manresa, who despatched messengers to verify the tale. Guided by the divine radiance a great

concourse of people speedily discovered a cave high above the Llobregat river. It lay between the church of St. Michael and the monastery, and contained the miraculous figure of Our Lady, which has ever since stood above the altar of her Chapel at Montserrat. It was decided to bear the statue to Manresa. On reaching the monastery it became fixed. No efforts could move it an inch. Inspired by this fresh miracle the hermits erected a chapel, where the high altar now stands. In 888 Geoffrey, Count of Barcelona, bestowed the mountain, with all its churches, chapels, hermitages and its great monastery upon the Benedictine monks established in the priory of Ripoll. Not until the thirteenth century was it made an independent abbey. At that date it was so reduced in numbers as to consist of only twelve monks, twelve hermits, twelve chaplains, and twelve lay brothers. Later still Pope Alexander VI united it to the Benedictine congregation of Valladolid.

Throughout the ages it has been the great pilgrim resort of Catalonia. Before starting on any hazardous, or noteworthy enterprise it was customary to repair to Montserrat. The journey uphill was made lighted taper in hand. Some devotees preferred to carry a wooden cross, or an iron weight. Once arrived at the gate the remainder of the ascent was made on the knees as far as the high altar. The proximity of the modern restaurant, whereat I lunched, would seem to prove that the days of strenuous pilgrimage are at an end. The twentieth century Spaniard is cast in a milder mould, and is well content to combine religion with pleasure.

The church stands on the far side of the innermost cloister. It was rebuilt in 1560 and completed thirty-nine years later. The installation of the miraculous Virgin, in her new abode, was celebrated with great pomp. Philip III assisted at the ceremony accompanied by a numerous retinue of nobles. Even the hermits descended from their mountain tops to participate. Corinthian pillars adorn the façade which looks south-west and is pierced by a rose window. A curious feature of Spanish churches is that none ever seems in direct accord with any given point of the compass. Above the entrance a white marble tablet depicts Pope Leo XIII. Higher still Christ is represented in the midst of His disciples.

The interior consists of a single nave and is absolutely dark, with the all pervading velvety blackness of a night without moon or stars. This renders the effect all the more striking and beautiful when, early in the morning, and again towards

sunset, the high altar is lit up with a brilliant display of candles. Raised above it, at a lofty altitude, is the small black figure of Our Lady of Montserrat robed in stiff ivory brocade and glittering jewels. On the back of her splendid gown are embroidered the cylindrical cones of her mountain. It was before her altar, in this very church, that St. Ignatius Loyola consecrated his sword to her service prior to founding the famous order of Jesuits.

The chapels, lining the side walls, are extremely rich and glitter with a mass of gold ornamentation. Formerly the wealth of decoration was almost fabulous. The entire church was ringed round with light by seventy-four great hanging lamps of massive silver. Practically every monarch and prince presented it with some costly and beautiful treasure. The Emperor Charles V paid it no less than nine visits. He died holding a lighted taper from its high altar in his hand. His natural son, the famous Archduke John of Austria, presented it, after the victory of Lepanto, with the beacon of the ship commanded by Ali Pasha. He further testified his devotion to the Madonna by expressing the desire to end his days in the monastery.

Surprised at the modern appearance of the church I asked a Benedictine the reason for it. He told me that, after Napoleon's troops had seized Barcelona, in 1808, a detachment penetrated as far as the monastery, which they occupied in 1812. Having looted the treasure the French placed gunpowder in the centre of the nave and fired it. The stout masonry walls and roof resisted, but the peerless wealth of ornamentation was wrecked, and had all to be renovated. The explanation of this act of vandalism lies in the fact that the mountains, behind Montserrat, were the chief stronghold of the Catalan insurgents, who made their headquarters in the monastery. Their rallying places were the high lying towns of Manresa, Cardona, Berga and Soleona.

The singing in the chapel is particularly fine. Many, if not all of the choristers are of noble birth, the lads having been sent to study at the famous school of sacred music directed by the monks. I met the scholars out walking, some two score small priests in embryo, looking very solemn in long black tightly fitting cassocks and the curious curly brimmed beaver hats of the Spanish clergy. As I stood aside, to let them pass, each politely raised his hat and bade me good evening.

With the exception of the ledge, upon which the monastery

is built, there is no level ground in Montserrat. A funicular railway ascends to the highest point, a little above the hermitage of San Jeronimo. This lofty retreat was always allotted to the youngest recluse, who, with age, qualified for one lower down in a less exposed position.

On the morning after my arrival I was wakened by a confused babble of voices. It was just 5 o'clock. Going to the window I looked down into the outer court, to find that it had been converted into a market place. Rows of baskets stretched down the centre while, spread out under the plane trees, were tomatoes, potatoes and a variety of other vegetables. Among them fettered chickens struggled noisily for freedom. Bargaining was brisk. Despite his reputed aversion for commercial pursuits, or, perhaps because of it, the Spaniard invariably begins by asking a high price in a very high handed manner.

CHAPTER V

TARRAGONA AND POBLET

BEFORE leaving England I had been advised that the easiest, and most economical way to travel, in Spain, was by kilometric ticket, a method which ensures a reduction of twenty-five per cent on the ordinary fare. Tickets of the kind are issued in book form, neatly bound after the manner of a British passport. The cover is a bright yellow. A photograph of the holder must be pasted inside for identification purposes. They are only available for use upon slow, or omnibus trains. An additional fee is charged for travelling by express. Personally I avoided the latter, on most occasions, as liable to be uncomfortably crowded. Even when armed with a kilometric ticket it is necessary to be early at the station. In no other country in the world are the preliminaries to even the shortest journey so complicated, and long drawn out.

I left Barcelona at 8.44 a.m. On the way to the Estacion del Norte I passed a khaki clad regiment of infantry starting on a route march. The men were small and lightly equipped, but looked sturdy. The officers carried drawn swords in the right hand, with the point downwards, and scabbards in the left. Mule carts followed with the commissariat and a field kitchen.

Almost my last view of the city was of an immense red brick edifice showily decorated with bright blue and white porcelain domes. This, I was informed, was the splendid new arenas, famed for the size of its vast auditorium. The popularity of bull fighting is so much on the increase that the older circus, behind Montjuich, spacious though it is, was found too small.

The railway line to Tarragona follows the coast and is most picturesque. At times it runs so near to the sea that the wash of the waves is heard above the noise of the train. Inland the scenery is broken by pineclad hills, their rocky grey sides displaying an occasional red gash.

On arrival at Tarragona I found some half dozen omnibuses lined up outside the station. Instantly I was assailed by their drivers. Each urged the superior merits of his particular hotel at the top of his voice. Deafened and bewildered I got into the nearest, a ramshackle conveyance drawn by a large and gaunt grey mule assisted by two small brown ones. They were incessantly exhorted to more strenuous effort by the driver, who flourished his whip with fine effect, but did not otherwise use it upon them. His well nourished condition was in striking contrast to theirs.

The road up to the town is steep and winding. Finally I was deposited at a modest-looking establishment, where the arrangements were of the most primitive description. The price demanded for a fourth floor room, little larger than a ship's cabin, was nearly double what I had paid in Barcelona. Discreet bargaining brought it down by ten pesetas. Even so I was well aware that this was at least twice as much as would be charged to a Spaniard. The stranger has to pay dearly for venturing into a strange land.

Having deposited my suit case, and ascertained that lunch was at one o'clock, I set out to see something of the place.

Tarragona is admirably situated on a rocky cliff immediately above the sea. To north and west it commands a wide flung view of the plain. Although now greatly diminished in size and importance, it took high rank amid the most flourishing cities of the ancient world. Its origin is lost in the mists of time, for it was founded, in prehistoric days, by one of the shadowy races, who peopled the peninsula before the advent of the Carthaginians and Greeks. The old walled city lies on the highest point of the rocky eminence behind the new town. The best idea of its ancient defences is gained from the Avenida Savedra, a broad road, which runs outside them for a considerable distance. It takes its name from Savedra Moriyas, the eminent *poligrafo*, whose bust, in black marble, adorns a lofty pedestal surrounded by pink geraniums. The ramparts are twenty feet thick. Natural rock and irregular blocks of stone form the lower portion, which is believed to date from about 700 B.C. and is ascribed to the Kessetanians, an Iberian race. The upper part is attributed to the Romans and is composed of smaller cut stones. Square towers project at intervals. Houses have been built into the walls, which are pierced by an arched doorway. The tunnel-like passage leads through to the city, a jumble of high old dwellings which face each other across narrow cobble paved

alleys. These run steeply uphill to the immense Palace of the Archbishop built on the site of the Roman citadel.

The see is one of the oldest in the peninsula. Founded in the time of the Goths it was suppressed by the Moors, and revived by the Counts of Barcelona. The primate bore the title of Prince of Tarragona. Upon him devolved the duty of crowning the Kings of Aragon. At that date the States General of Catalonia assembled in his city, likewise various important church councils. Here it was that the marriage of James I, with an Infanta of Castile, was annulled in 1228.

The Cathedral occupies a central position in the old town, and lies almost immediately below the Archbishop's Palace. Built of freestone, in a light shade of brown, it gains additional dignity from a steep flight of wide steps, which lead up to the stone paved square that stretches, terrace-like, in front of the main entrance and constitutes the market place. Two old fountains stand at the foot of the stairs. All day long they are the resort of women, who come to fill big earthenware vessels of severely Roman design. To right a large house displays a bronze tablet. The inscription states that the site was the closing scene of the sanguinary French attack, in 1811, and pays tribute to the infantry, who defended it to the last, even though the remainder of the city had fallen.

The façade of the Cathedral displays the customary rose window, above the lofty pointed arch of an elaborate portal. The two richly wrought metal doors were a gift from Archbishop Gonzalo de Heredia, in 1510. They are furnished with large ring shaped knockers, and are separated by a finely carved column, that serves as support to the Madonna and Child. Twelve curious figures stretch in a line. Seemingly they are seated in railway trucks. The latter are, in reality, stone coffins, the occupants of which are starting up in alarm at sound of the Last Trumpet, blown by an angel. Low down, on pedestals, to left and right of the portal, stand a number of life-sized figures of antique design. Five are missing to north, and four on the south side. Hare explains their absence by a local superstition to the effect that, every hundred years, one steps down from his post and, wearied of his long vigil, walks away.

The interior dates from the thirteenth century and is divided by three naves. The widest is in the centre and is blocked by the walls of the choir. Upon entering, the eye is instantly caught by a superb marble sarcophagus resting against the trascoro. This is the tomb of Jacopo, otherwise

James I, best known as the Conqueror. The inscription describes him as King of Aragon, Valencia, the Balearic Isles, Barcelona and Urcelli. He died in Valencia on August 6th, 1276, and was buried at Poblet, the famous monastery which served as royal mausoleum. This was wrecked in 1835 by the population, "who impiously laid profane hands upon the august sepulchres of the Kings of Aragon." In the following year the tomb of the greatest of them all, James the Conqueror, was removed to its present site in the Cathedral by order of Elizabeth II, Queen of Spain. So runs the graven record.

Few men and fewer kings have had so stirring and romantic a career. Even his birth was attended by remarkable circumstances. He was the first and only child born to Pedro II of Aragon and his Queen Maria, a granddaughter of the Emperor of Constantinople. The royal lady was anxious for her son to be under the special protection of one of the Apostles. By advice of her confessor twelve tapers were consecrated and lighted simultaneously. It was decided that the infant heir to the throne should bear the name of the Apostle, whose candle burnt the longest. Keen and breathless was the suspense as each, in turn, died down to the socket, gave a final flicker, spluttered and went out. At last only two remained—those of Judas and James the Greater. The Queen was in acute distress. Never, never could she call her infant after the Betrayer! Fortunately a moth flew in at the window, and saved the situation by extinguishing Judas. Loud and long was the rejoicing. As Southey expresses it in his poem :

"Glory to Santiago,
The mighty one in war;
James he is called and he shall be
King James the Conqueror."

The best time to visit the Cathedral is in the morning, when the sun shines full upon the west windows. Those, at the east end, are small and admit little light. The main altar, and side chapels are characterised by that lavish wealth of ornament common to Spanish churches. Some fine carving decorates the organ, which rises above the left side of the choir. The dominant impression, however, is of immensity. The lofty stone roof seems immeasurably far off. It is very silent and dark in the empty naves, and in the great gloomy transept, that yawns between the coro and Capilla Mayor, the oldest part of the building. The mind is awed, as at sight

of some vast mountain range, and man is made to feel very small and insignificant. In all Spanish cathedrals I was conscious of this dwarf-like sensation, but in none was it so pronounced as at Tarragona.

The spacious cloisters date from the thirteenth century, and are among the most beautiful specimens of the kind. Tombstones, with elaborate escutcheons, form the pavement. In the centre stretches a cool green garden of palms, and lemon trees weighted with pale yellow fruit.

Here, as in Barcelona, the favourite promenade is termed the Ramblas. It traverses the modern town and consists of a wide central walk shaded by plane trees. Vehicular traffic is restricted to the roads running at either side. The northern end is dominated by a handsome monument to the defenders of 1811, who offered a brief but gallant resistance to the French, under Suchet, to whom the city fell on June 29th. At the opposite extremity stands a lofty stone pedestal topped by the bronze figure of a thirteenth century warrior in full armour. This is none other than the valiant Admiral Roger le Lauria, one of the most conspicuous figures in the annals of the Aragonese Navy. An old chronicler describes him as: "The most illustrious of those great seamen, whom Pedro had attracted to his service by permitting them to enjoy at once the authority of an Admiral, and the liberty of a corsair."

Lauria had special claims upon the royal favour as foster brother of Queen Constance, Pedro's consort. He was largely instrumental in securing Sicily for Aragon, from Charles of Anjou. After defeating the French fleet, off Malta, in June 1284, he again beat it severely in the Bay of Naples, when he captured the Prince of Salerno, Charles of Anjou's son. Thanks to him Aragon continued for some time to enjoy maritime supremacy in the western Mediterranean.

From de Lauria's statue a wide road runs round the top of the cliff to the Rambla de San Carlos, so called from an old gateway, which formed part of the fortifications knocked down by the French in 1811. All that now remains of it is a ruined yellow tower of octagonal shape, which serves as support for telegraph posts and wires. Facing it is the Artillery barracks, guarded by a grey sentry box, and a soldier on duty.

The steep Calle de Pilatos runs up to a lofty and massive yellow building. It is entirely of stone. The blocks are of different sizes, some being of considerable dimensions. Grated windows pierce the thick walls at irregular intervals. This is the celebrated Palace of Augustus known locally as the Torreón

de Pilatus, from a tradition that Pontius Pilate was a native of Tarragona. Erected by the Romans it was an immense edifice superbly decorated in the Doric style. The exterior was covered with finely carved reliefs among which were sculptured representations of the sacrificial bull. It overlooked the circus so that in Tarragona, as at Rome, the Emperor might watch the chariot races, gladiatorial contests and sanguinary combats with wild beasts, from his own window. In the blood stained arena many a wretched slave, overcome by a superior adversary, implored life of some young and beautiful woman who, by a gesture, decided his fate. At other times the amphitheatre served as a market place. As such it was frequented by merchants, astrologers and the motley crowd always to be found in such resorts.

It was in his palace at Tarragona that Augustus received the ambassadors from India and Scythia. The Emperor Adrian spent the winter of 131 here. The sojourn nearly cost him his life. He was walking in the garden when a demented slave fell upon him and would have killed him, but for the arrival of his suite. After the death of Augustus, Tarragona erected a temple to him on the site of the present cathedral.

The misfortunes of the town began under Gallien, when it was sacked by the Vandals. In the fifth century it was captured by the Visigoths, who lost it to the Moors three hundred years later. It continued in Muhammadan hands until wrested from them by the Counts of Barcelona. Thereafter it suffered many vicissitudes. To-day it is a small provincial town. Nothing remains of its one time magnificence but a famous name and a faded memory of past greatness.

The palace of its Cæsars is a decrepid old building converted into a prison. I was about to photograph the little geranium planted court, when a soldier in uniform stepped up and warned me away. The sound of musket practice floated up from the sleepy seashore, which owes its mole to the exertions of that much abused sovereign, Charles IV. Begun in 1790, the work was carried out by convicts under the direction of Brigadier Smith, chief Naval engineer.

The last imposing memorial of the glory of Tarragona is the Roman aqueduct, romantically situated in the plain some few miles out. An iron gate, to right of the dusty white road, admits to a path, stony, steep and winding. This climbs up between pines, wild flowers, vines and aloes to the great yellow watercourse, composed of two lofty tiers of arches, built of fitted stone blocks quarried in the gully some hundred paces

away. The upper tier consists of twenty-five arches, and the lower of eleven. Surmounting all is a narrow stone channel about a foot and a half in depth. During the reign of Charles IV an officer of the Walloon Guards made a bet to ride across it. Arrived in the centre he discovered a ten foot gap in the masonry. This his horse refused to take. Without dismounting he bandaged its eyes, urged it to the perilous leap, and so accomplished the journey in safety. The aqueduct stretches from one series of green hills to another over a narrow ravine, the bed of which was dry, when I saw it, in June. From the west, however, came the musical ripple of running water. The only house within sight was the humble white cottage of the watchman and his wife.

Most travellers in Spain make a point of visiting Tarragona. Few, however, undertake the journey thence to Poblet, the royal mausoleum which was, for the Kings of Aragon, what the Escorial came, centuries later, to be for the sovereigns of united Spain. Possibly the expedition to the old monastery presents too many difficulties for any but the enthusiast. The nearest station is at Espluga de Francoli. This is reached by a train, which starts from Tarragona at 7.30 a.m.

As a general rule Spaniards are late risers. The usual breakfast of coffee and a roll is not served before eight o'clock, hence the traveller, making an early start, must reconcile himself to the prospect of a prolonged fast.

Kilometric tickets are not available on the side line running to Espluga which, although merely thirty-one miles distant, is not reached much before eleven o'clock. The old town of Reuss is passed on the way. Its chief interest now centres in the fact that it was the birthplace of Prim who, after leading the Spanish army to victory, in Africa, was murdered, in Madrid, as the result of political intrigue. The country side is well cultivated, and dotted with picturesque villages. Among the many trees I noted numerous filberts. They seemed a speciality of the district, for I saw them nowhere else in Spain.

Poblet is visible from the station, whence it appears a wide spread brown pile that conveys the impression of a citadel. Behind it rises a rampart of mountains. In front of it opens a broad and fertile plain. The hermits of old were well inspired when they chose the site.

Hardly had I descended from the train than a small boy volunteered as guide. Led by him I plunged down hill into the ancient village of Esplugà. The cobble stones of its

narrow winding streets made walking a painful process. They were overlooked by houses with projecting upper storeys supported by stout wooden beams. Once out in the country the road improved. Sinuous as a snake it writhed amid vineyards, then uphill to a splendid avenue of silver birch.

The sanctity of the route was emphasised by a large Gothic cross and some mutilated stone figures. These last represented the Abbot St. Bernard and his two sisters, Maria and Gratia, all of whom suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Moors. After that the route was lined with fine trees as far as the monastery.

Poblet is entered through a gate, on the west side, surmounted by a square tower adorned with small figures of the Madonna and Child. This admits to the first enclosure guarded by stone walls, some six feet high, topped by a crenelated parapet. Following a poplar planted avenue I passed a long range of buildings on the right. The exterior is still adorned with fragments of carving. Great wine vats and barrels fill the interior. They bear eloquent testimony to the good cheer wherewith the monks of old regaled those who feasted at their hospitable board.

Scattered everywhere are remains of edifices, which appear to have been subjected to some sudden overwhelming catastrophe. The ruin is the more awe-inspiring and mysterious in that no hint of it transpires until viewed at close quarters. Amid the tangle of weed and débris, littering the ground, are vestiges of the many stone altars, and statues of local martyrs, which formed a feature of the outer enceinte. Here they were pleasantly situated under the shade of trees. The second portal displays lions rampant and armorial bearings. The narrow arch is flanked by octagonal towers, and follows the approved model of city gates common in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Before passing it strangers were required to relinquish their arms. Those who objected were informed that even the most exalted princes were not exempt from this rule.

The second line of defences formed a square. The walls were higher and more solid than the outer, and possessed twelve towers and emplacements for cannon. Within lies a vast courtyard, now a wilderness of grass, clover, poppies and tall purple wildflowers, looked down upon by irregular yellow buildings, their tiled roofs garlanded with a tangle of weed. Everywhere the remains of fine carving testify to the exuberant wealth of decoration once lavished upon the place.

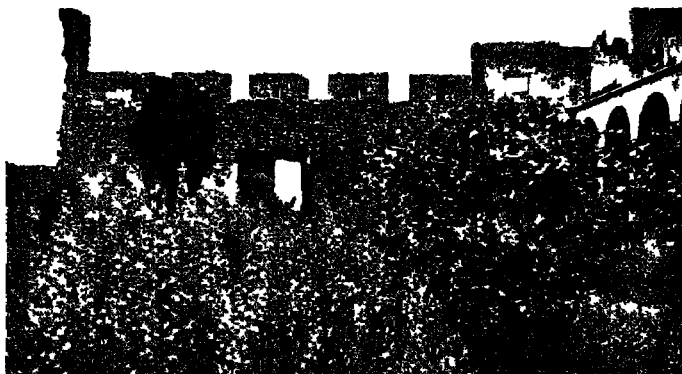
Owing to its lofty position a beautiful group of the Madonna, and two saints alone have escaped.

Great octagonal towers flank the door, which leads into the stone paved hall. Beyond are the lovely cloisters. Nothing could exceed the delicacy and variety of the encircling arcades. The capital of each slender column displays a different design. High up on the walls, under the radiating arches of the roof, are a number of stone sarcophagi. All are splendidly carved. Some still retain traces of rich colour, and gilding. Others again display the remains of turquoise tiling. In the centre the deserted garden is perfumed with red and white roses, which struggle to thrust their fragrant blooms upwards, through the riot of greenery, to greet the sun. On the north side a Gothic dome rises above what was once a fountain. Now its source is for ever dry. In place of the life giving water it is blocked by a great stone coffin. The lid has fallen off and the bones are scattered to the winds.

Silence and the solitude of utter abandonment reign in the deserted cloisters once peopled by cowed monks in trailing white habits. Here, insensible to the voluptuous appeal of the roses, and the glancing golden play of the sunlight, they paced, breviary in hand, amid the tombs.

The glamour of the supernatural invests the founding of the monastery with mystical significance. Poblet was a saintly recluse, who withdrew from his native place of Ulles, in the diocese of Tarragona, to the neighbourhood which has immortalised his name. Here he built a hermitage near what was then known as Lardata. The fame of his sanctity reached the Moorish potentate, who ruled supreme over the land. By his command the hermit was thrice seized, securely fettered and carried off captive. Each time he was miraculously freed from his chains, and transported back to his retreat. Impressed by the marvel, as well he might be, the Infidel Prince made the holy hermit a present of the ground, thenceforward known as the Huerta de Poblet.

No sooner did the sun of royal favour shine upon the ascetic than he was joined by others desirous of participating in his spiritual and material privileges. In this way a religious colony was formed. Miracles continued to manifest themselves, notably in the twelfth century, at which epoch brilliant lights were seen, in a neighbouring wood, on several consecutive Saturdays. By this time Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, was Lord of the Land. Eagerly availing himself of so auspicious an omen he built a church upon the site, as a



THE WALL AT MONTMANT



THE CLOISTERS OF BLIT

mausoleum for his line. About it he erected a monastery, which he conferred upon the Abbott of the Cistercian Order resident at Fontfroide, by an act dated January 18th, 1149. At first the Abbott was elected for life. Afterwards this was reduced to a term of four years. The monastery was very rich. It possessed seven baronies and founded three dependent monasteries, namely at Aragon, Valencia and Majorca.

From the east side of the cloisters steps lead down to the splendid Sala Capitulaire, or Chapter House distinguished for the beauty of the eight columns supporting its arched ceiling. In a row along the stone paved floor, where the light of great stained glass windows fell richly upon them, stretch the graven effigies of mitred Abbots, each in the splendour of his sacramental robes. Many of the dates are obliterated. One of the clearest is A.D. 1623.

A little further on is the large church. It has three naves and is built in the form of a cross. The high altar has disappeared, but the marble reredos remains. Its innumerable niches are crowded with sculptured figures until it seems as though all the saints in the calendar must be represented. To right and left of the altar steps, the lofty marble tombs of the Kings of Aragon rise in tiers along the central aisle once enclosed by the choir. Here repose noseless effigies, broken sceptres and shattered crowns. Even in their utter ruin they are beautiful. The first, on the left, nearest to the sanctuary, is that of Alfonso II. Next comes Juan I. Buried with him are his two wives and his daughter, Joan of Aragon. On the right was the marble sarcophagus of James the Conqueror, since removed to the Cathedral of Tarragona. Near him slept Pedro IV and his three wives, Marie of Navarre, Eleanor of Portugal and Eleanor of Sicily. The third sarcophagus contained Fernando I. By the side of his effigy lies that of his wife Leonora, although that Queen's body was actually interred at Medina del Campo, in the monastery which she founded. In Fernando's vault sleep twelve princes, the sons of various kings of Aragon.

Another fine monument is that of the Infante Henry, son of Fernando and Leonora. He was Grand Master of Santiago. His two wives were buried with him. Opposite is the splendid kneeling figure of Alfonso V, King of Aragon and Naples. He died at the latter place, in 1458, and was transported thence to Poblet in 1671. Not the least magnificent of the sepulchres are those of the Counts and Dukes of Segorbe and Cardona. Many of the carved figures retain traces of the colour and gild-

ing, which invested the marble effigies with the glowing hues of life. By a curious conceit some of the faces were coated with silver. Following the royal example nobles and great prelates eagerly sought the distinction of being buried in Poblet. There they lay in the incense laden, many coloured twilight of great stained glass windows, secure throughout the centuries. No sound disturbed their peace but the chanting of priests, and the strains of holy music, which floated upwards to the vast arched roof, as though eager to swell the celestial choir. Not until the nineteenth century was their sanctuary violated. Dynastic disputes, among the descendants of the very monarchs who lie buried there, led to their tombs suffering desecration. Spain was convulsed by the counter claims of Isabel and her uncle Don Carlos, hence the Carlist campaign of 1831 and the collapse of regular government which ensued. Tempted by the wealth of the abbey, crowds, eager for loot, battered down its doors, smashing and burning what they could not bear away. The orgy of destruction was carried on with unabated fury until nothing but ruins remained to tell of the most superb monastery in Spain.

Nature, as though to make amends for the insensate acts of man, has festooned with green the gaping window spaces of the church. As I stood there amid the broken splendour of the tombs, a blinding flash rent the darkness, followed by a tremendous crash of thunder. For half an hour the storm raged. All the while the lightning glanced hither and thither with the swift play of a golden rapier. In a temporary lull - the sonorous voice of the guide made itself heard as he moved about explaining, in Catalan, the mystery and wonder of it all. Pausing before the desolate altar he told how great tapers, and richly wrought lamps had burnt night and day, and how prayer had succeeded prayer in an endless chain. In the adjoining hall visitors of old were shown acts, and donations from both Christian and Moorish monarchs, thankofferings, in the form of splendid jewelled crosses and church plate, papal bulls in favour of Poblet, and a list of the great of the earth, who had come as humble pilgrims to the shrine. Many princes had donned the habit of the Order, and died in the monastery. Near the stairs, leading to the dormitories, was the tomb of Raymond Folch, tenth Viscount of Cordona, who died in 1320. Three centuries later, when his remains were transferred to Poblet, he was found to have been a man of gigantic stature. Moreover his body was as fresh, and well preserved as though he had only just drawn his last breath.

Gone are the decorations of the royal suite, wherein Kings sojourned as guests of the Abbey. Not a trace remains of the thirty ebony book cases, protected by Venetian glass, which contained the unique library.

Passing out to the fresh air of a hidden cloister I found the ground choked with a wealth of vegetation. Fig and cherry trees, their branches weighted with fruit, struggled through an undergrowth of elder blossoms, roses,—red, white and yellow,—honeysuckle and brambles. All around gaped the empty windows of vast yellow ruins. Stairs led up to break off in mid air. Rooms were without floors, and chambers lacked a roof. Everywhere grass sprouted and flowering weed. The might of Kings was broken. Nature had come into her own.

CHAPTER VI

VALENCIA AND ALBUFERA

VALENCIA is a friendly city. This genial atmosphere is all pervading. It even envelops the beggar, who sits by the wayside in narrow crowded calle, or congested paseo, and merely invites donations by raising his hat. The dignified reticence of his appeal is most effective. Of this he is, doubtless, well aware. He is a masterly exponent of the mendicant's art, and easily outclasses his countless competitors scattered through the land. In addition Valencia is one of the brightest and busiest of Spanish towns. It enjoys the advantages of a port without the drawbacks. This immunity is due to the fact that the harbour is three miles distant at Grao, at the mouth of the Turia, or Guadalviar. That wide river empties its turbid red waters into the sparkling blue of the Mediterranean without inflicting a stain.

All around stretches some of the most fertile country in the peninsula. Mile succeeds mile of rich red soil patterned with rice fields, vineyards, olive, orange and lemon groves. For hours the train traverses orchards of peaches, nectarines, mulberries, scarlet blossomed pomegranates, and almonds, varied by an occasional yellow stretch of ripening grain. The radiant vista is bounded by the blue of the sea, on the east, and by the green of mountains to west. This superabundance of fruit lent a curious appearance to the little station of Villareal, where the platform literally disappeared under great piles of oranges. A long line of railway trucks was loaded with the same golden fruit. Groves covered the entire district. The vivid yellow of oranges shone out from amid the dark foliage with the brilliancy of lamps, and the warm air, as it floated in at the train window, was charged with their heavy scent.

At Sagunto, where there was a brief wait, boys ran up and down selling long chains of nectarines and cherries deftly woven together. The small town is picturesquely situated

at the foot of a precipitous rock, its grey sides girt about with tawny battlements of great antiquity. Founded by the Iberians the place is famed in history for the vain, but heroic resistance which it offered to Hannibal, in 219 B.C. The Romans took it from the Carthagenians five years later, and built some splendid public edifices notably a theatre and circus. Under the Moors it went by the name of Murviedo, or Old Walls, and was temporarily held by the Cid. Suchet captured it for the French, in 1812, and strengthened the defences. The last important event, in which it figured, was in 1887, when Marshal Martinez Campo here proclaimed the restoration of the Bourbon Dynasty, in the person of Alfonso XII, father of the present King.

On the outskirts of Valencia still linger the traditional dwellings of the peasantry, those snow white barracas designed on the familiar lines of Noah's Ark. Slit-like window openings pierce the thick walls. The sloping thatched roofs lack chimneys. Instead, a small upright iron cross appears at either end, for Valencia is essentially pious. The saints are everywhere. They are carved on public buildings, and painted outside houses. They shelter in niches, and look down from lofty arched gateway, roof and tower. In high three cornered shrines they stand, large as life, guarding the approach to the Puente Real, a massive stone bridge of ten arches built, in 1599, to replace the old wooden structure, which collapsed under the crowds, who thronged across it at the entry of Charles V. Below, the muddy red Turia emits a most unsavoury odour as it flows between wide banks laid out with handsome avenues of plane, acacia and eucalyptus. On the far side stretches the Almeida, the fashionable promenade. Here troops drill in the afternoon under the shade of great trees. In the evening Society and his wife and daughters drive slowly up and down. On this occasion the ladies venture to appear in hats, otherwise mantillas are the rule.

Count de Laborde gives an entertaining account of the upper classes of Valencia, as he found them, at the beginning of last century. At that date three social distinctions were strictly observed, namely red blood, blue blood and yellow blood. To the first category belonged those ancient families, whose titles were conferred by either the Kings of Aragon, or Castille. Of second rank were those of less exalted lineage, while the third comprised unhappy persons, whose patent of nobility merely dated back two, or three generations. The three grades kept strictly apart regarding each other with

contempt, or envy as the case might be. From this it would appear that in Laborde's day snobbishness masqueraded as Spanish pride.

Near the northern end of the Almeida lie some delightfully unconventional public gardens. Trees and flowers grow as they please unhampered by the restraint of rigid border and cramping bed. Poppies run riot in every size, and hue and variety. The hot sunshine is charged with their penetrating narcotic odour. Beyond lies a covered garden lightly roofed over with dried pine branches. Diverse paths lead to a central pond, cool, and green and mysterious. Ducks swim placidly round great artificial frogs. The white plaster figures of naked children sit upon rockeries, and huge white dolphins disport themselves amid the dappled gold and emerald of the shadow haunted pool. Plaster animals and reptiles lurk under the encircling bushes, to the joyous surprise of small boys and girls, who come upon them unexpectedly.

The walls of the old city were levelled in 1871. Their place is taken by a series of wide roads along which electric trams run. Of the eight ancient gates only two remain, namely the Torre de Serranos, which gives its name to the neighbouring bridge, and is the north gate of the town, and the Torre del Quarte, or West Gate. Both are similar in design and of lofty and imposing proportions. Each mighty portal is flanked by large crenelated towers of cut stone girdled, towards the battlements, with balconies. The low arch of the doorway is surmounted by a helmet and double crown supported by angels. Such is the exterior. The side, facing the town, comes as a complete surprise. From here the turrets are seen to be hollow and to consist of a series of open chambers connected by steps. The great gate looks as though it had been cut in half. The Torre de Serranos is the older of the two. Its foundations were laid by the Romans. James I is supposed to have entered by it after forcing the Moors to surrender, in 1238. The flanking towers were not completed until a century later.

As in all Spanish towns the heart of Valencia centres in the Cathedral. Known as La Seo it is dedicated to the Virgin, and was founded, in 1262, on the site of a great Moorish Mosque, which had, in its turn, usurped the place of a Christian church built above the ruins of the Roman temple of Diana.

Its most conspicuous feature is La Miguelta, an elaborately decorated octagonal tower, four storeys in height. The last is pierced by large windows. Grass and weed sprout upon the

sculptured gargoyles, and little grey and black patterned lizards dart up the walls in fearless fashion. Tradition states that the Gothic belfry stands upon the very spot occupied by the minaret of the Mosque, up the stone steps of which the Cid led his wife, and two daughters, Elvira and Sol, in 1094, to view the extent of the fair city, which had just fallen to his arms.

The main entrance of the Cathedral faces the Calle de Zaragoza and is adorned with a bewildering quantity of carved figures. The door is overlaid with brass, amid the ornamentation of which appear a sun and moon. On entering, an extraordinary old painting is noted in one of the side chapels to right. It is characteristic of the fascination which the gruesome holds for Spanish artists. A dead man is depicted with the utmost realism. He is stretched on a bed. His lower jaw has fallen and the rigid features are set in an expression of indescribable horror. Three grinning demons bend over him whispering into his left ear, while a priest seeks to ward them off by holding aloft a crucifix. As usual the central nave is blocked by the choir. The *trascora* is particularly splendid. It displays twelve carved panels of alabaster sunk into red marble. Each is crowded with figures and minor details. One of the finest represents Elijah's ascent to Heaven in a chariot of fire. A handsome brass rail stretches across the front of the choir, and encloses a path thence to the sanctuary, which is similarly protected.

The high altar is a blaze of gilding. The *reredos* frames six richly coloured scenes from the life of Christ. Scallop shells, garlands of flowers and fruit, angels and holy figures, all heavily overlaid with gold leaf, adorn the sides and arch of the apse in florid fashion. Equally gaudy and crowded is the superabundant decoration lavished upon the side chapels. More daylight than is usual, in Gothic edifices of the kind, filters through the clear, colourless glass of the double row of windows lining the dome. The ribs, and beautiful central motifs of the radiating arches supporting the lofty roof are thickly outlined in gold.

The exterior of the Cathedral is most irregular. The alleys separating it from the surrounding houses are so narrow that all architectural effect is lost excepting on the side of the square. Here an interesting relic is preserved in the hall of No. 5 Place Almoina, where visitors are shown a yellow pillar bearing the following inscription: "Columna Romana de los Ios tempos de los Cesares. A ella fue atado San Vicente

Martir para ser Atormentado." Near by an arched overhead passage connects the Cathedral with the small round church of Our Lady of Desamparados, patroness of foundlings. Its chief external feature is the large dome of glazed tiling in a brilliant shade of royal blue, topped by a small kiosk, and a cupola similarly adorned with azulejos. This is the most popular place of worship in Valencia and is always crowded. High above the brilliantly lighted altar stands the glittering figure of the Virgin, an enamelled wooden statue with flowing natural hair. Her stiff golden robes are ablaze with diamonds, great emeralds and other precious stones. Her lofty crown is entirely of diamonds, while, for halo, she has a diamond sun, each glittering ray terminating in a brilliant star. Those desirous of doing so can mount the stairs, behind the sanctuary, and kiss her hand.

Of all populous resorts the market place is the noisiest and most thronged. Hundreds of stalls jostle one another in the long narrow Plaza del Mercado. Each is protected by an awning of yellow canvas. The scene is one to be remembered. Vendors strive vainly to keep the swarms of flies at bay with long palm switches. Their wares are irresistibly attractive. It is just possible that the fastidious foreigner may take exception to deep baskets brimming over with slowly moving masses of snails. He had better not be too squeamish. Those same snails, or some very much like them, will inevitably figure on his hotel menu most days of the week, served with rice, saffron, pimento, a crayfish or two and some other savoury odds and ends. Features of the market are skinny chickens halved and quartered for the benefit of the frugally minded, who can buy a single leg, or a wing if so inclined. Gradually, in spite of the banter, the bargaining and the busy multi-coloured throngs, the brilliant sunshine and the novelty, the stranger, is conscious of a curiously detached sensation. A shadow seems to have fallen across the gay scene. Then he remembers. It was here, in the Plaza del Mercado, that the Cid, in defiance of his oath, caused the valiant Ahmed Ibn Jihaf to be burnt at the stake, for his loyalty in refusing to reveal where Yahya, the Moorish monarch, had buried his treasure. The old market place has witnessed much that was grim. Executions were held in it, and those dread autos de fé carried out with all the awful solemnity of the Inquisition. It has also seen many a brilliant tournament presided over by the King and Queen, surrounded by their court and all the gold and glowing hues of mediæval pageantry.

On one side stretches the Lonja, or Exchange, a magnificent Gothic building dating from the reign of King Ferdinand the Catholic, when it was erected as a silk market on the site of the Moorish citadel. Opposite rises the huge irregular pile of Los Santos Juanos, the most florid church in Valencia. The interior is loaded with decoration. A fine fresco of the Almighty on His throne adorns the vaulted ceiling. Carved white figures, rather larger than life, represent the twelve sons of Isaac. The reredos appears to be of solid gold, so heavily is it gilt. At either side project gilt lions mounted by cherubs, holding the chains of massive bronze lamps, wherein burn red lights.

Near by, in the Calle de la Lonja, is a small court partially filled with shabby booths containing second-hand books, rusty keys and similar articles. One side is occupied by an old stone building of a single storey. Sculptured crowns form a parapet about the flat roof. The interior is the Excise Office and contains weights and measures. A marble tablet, on the outer wall, tells how here, in this very place, the people of Valencia declared war against Napoleon, on May 23rd, 1808. A few paces distant, in the narrow Calle de Caballeros, is the Palace of Justice, a sixteenth century edifice that terminates in a large tower. It originally housed the Chamber of Deputies, a body which largely directed the affairs of the Kingdom of Valencia.

On entering the hall a brief flight of stone steps leads to a court far famed for its ceiling, an astonishing masterpiece of the artesanado, or honeycomb order, of carved wood richly overlaid with gold. Diminutive cherub heads, rosy cheeked, red lipped and smiling, peep from the depths of each sunken square. At the further end of the room stretches a long red covered table. On the bench preside three judges in black, the severity of their robes emphasised, rather than relieved, by broad cuffs of white lace. Upstairs is the Cortes, where, of old, the States General assembled to decide the destinies of the kingdom. It is impossible to view unmoved the impressive grandeur of the historical chamber. The ceiling is of sombre carving with here and there a gleam of gold. The walls are covered with great paintings depicting the assembly of the states. All three orders are represented, stately figures in scarlet cloaks, white ruffs, pointed beards and high black boat shaped hats. The ancient Cortes is now a court of law, in which the presiding judge is distinguished by a tall closely fitting black cap surmounted by a large

pompom. The adjoining hall, or landing is hung with portraits of the Kings of Aragon. Off it opens a small oratorio, which contains some old tapestry.

A curious service is held every Friday morning at ten o'clock in the church of Corpus Christi, which, with the adjoining college of the Patriarchs, was founded by Juan Ribera, Archbishop of Valencia, in 1586. On this special weekly occasion ladies are required to wear unrelieved black, and veil themselves in mantillas, otherwise they are not admitted. Entrance is through a large well lit hall. A crocodile adorns the wall with museum-like effect. In one corner a woman hires out collapsible stools for the modest fee of twenty centimos. There are no seats in the church. When I entered the service had already begun. It was very dark and the atmosphere oppressively charged with incense. Lights burnt on the high altar before a large painting of the Last Supper by F. Ribalta, and also in a side chapel, to left, where some two score ladies were gathered. The remainder of the edifice was plunged in gloom. Almost immediately my attention was attracted to the Sacristan, a mediæval figure in long closely fitting black habit and full bottomed brown wig. Armed with a silver tipped staff of ebony he kept passing to and fro, turning now to right, then to the left, and bowing profoundly before each of the many side shrines. With indescribable dignity he headed an imposing procession of priests and choir. The wailing notes of the Miserere swelled louder and more poignant. With the graceful majesty of the setting sun Ribalta's great picture sank out of sight below the altar. In its place hung a black veil. Slowly this melted away revealing a life sized figure of Christ on the Cross. The immense Crucifix stood out in strong relief against a black and silver background. Then night closed in again. The singing died down to silence. The Last Supper looked out from its massive gold frame leaving the beholder half inclined to rub his eyes, and wonder whether it were all an optical illusion.

The old citadel stands in the broad Plaza de Tetuan. It was built by the Emperor Charles as a protection against the redoubtable pirate, Barbarossa. Together with the former Dominican Monastery it is now utilised as an arsenal and artillery barracks. Despite these changes the clock, with true Spanish conservatism, refuses to move with the times. Its hand points permanently to eleven. The ancient monastic church of San Domingo has been preserved intact

and repays a visit. It is entered by way of a high narrow gate adorned with pillars and saints. Within stretches a small courtyard brilliantly carpeted with fuchsias and geraniums under the green shade of palms. Beyond is the church. In it the celebrated Dominican, St. Vincent de Ferrer, assumed the cowl in the fourteenth century. He was a native of Valencia, of which city he is patron saint. The most interesting portion of the church is the small Gothic chapel of los Reyes built by Alfonso V, King of Aragon. It is blocked by the magnificent white marble tombs of Rodrici Mendoza, Marquess of Zenete, and of Maria Monseca, his wife. He lies stretched out in full armour. She, by contrast, looks a gentle nun-like figure, with a singularly placid countenance.

Particular significance attaches to the Temple, a domed building on the river side to north-west of the Royal bridge, for near it stood the famous gate of the Cid. Through it the national hero of Castile entered in triumph, as conqueror, and out of it he passed, in awful majesty, after death. All are familiar with the strange and dramatic episode. After capturing Valencia from the Moors, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, best known as the Cid, held it nominally for the Castilian king, but virtually for himself. The Muhammadans were bent upon retaking the city, and advanced upon it in overpowering numbers. The news of their approach reached the Cid as he lay dying. Game to the end the old warrior charged his wife, Ximena, to keep the fact of his death secret. Instead of mourning the event, bells were to ring, and bugles blow, as though for some splendid victory. His corpse was to be clad in full armour. His good sword, Tizona, was to be placed in his hand. Mounted on his faithful charger, Babieca, he was to lead his followers out of Valencia and so fight his last battle with the Moors. His orders were obeyed. A glittering cavalcade trooped through the gate of the Cid, headed by the dead warrior on his white steed, cut their way through the advancing infidel host and so reached Burgos, his ancestral home.

With the exception of its blue domes and its pottery Valencia has preserved few traces of Moorish influence. The most substantial heritage left by those days is at Burjasot, in the suburbs, two and a half miles to north-west. Here is the immense Arabian granary known as los Silos. Trams run to within a few yards of it. The approach is up steps, and a long terrace to a vast stone platform raised some forty feet above the ground. This is the roof of the granary, which

was filled from above through round openings covered by small domes, each of which is held in place by an iron chain, two metal rings and a padlock. A weather worn cross stands in the middle. The roof serves as playground for children, some half score of whom gathered round me eager to have their photos taken. It also commands a fine view of Valencia, which looks wonderfully green for a great city. Lofty belfries, and glittering tiled domes rise from what appears a forest of trees bordered by the radiant blue of the Mediterranean.

In addition to its many other attractions Valencia possesses a lagoon, the historical lake of Albufera bestowed upon Marshal Suchet by Napoleon, in 1812, together with the title of Duke of Albufera. Few people visit it, however. This is less surprising than it sounds as the trip is attended with difficulties, which are by no means compensated for by results. Under the mistaken impression that it was a show place and easy of access, I started for it at two o'clock on a particularly hot June afternoon. The tram took me as far as the village of Catarroja. Here I struck to the left down a succession of narrow alleys abominably paved with small irregular cobble stones. The air was literally black with flies. The entire place was swarming with them. Women were seated idly in the doorways. One nodded in friendly fashion, whereupon I asked her the way to Albufera. The question aroused her to sudden animation. Her husband was a boatman she said. He would take me. With this she shouted something to the house opposite. As a result a swarthy unshaven face was thrust through an upper window. A parley ensued with this singularly unattractive individual. How much would he charge for his services? The question had to be repeated several times. Finally, prompted by his wife, he named twenty pesetas. I offered ten and was met by a surly refusal. At this I proceeded alone.

Once across the railway line, I found myself in open country. Apparently the plain rolled on to the horizon unbroken by any sign of a canal. Eventually I found a road, quite the worst I have ever struck. It was as deeply rutted as a ploughed field, full of holes and strewn with large sharp stones. Yellow stretches of tall wheat lay to right and left. These were succeeded by flooded country and the vivid green of sprouting rice. Here I essayed to walk in a narrow stone gutter until met by a viper, which had evidently been inspired by a like desire to escape from the perils of the road.

At last the masts of some fishing smacks appeared rising out of what seemed to be the middle of the earth. I had reached the canal, a muddy ditch which terminated abruptly at the entrance to a village. There seemed no particular reason why it should begin, or end there, and a good many why it should not. A humble fonda stood near by. The door was open revealing a dirty interior, bare excepting for an apology for a counter littered with a few almost empty bottles. The only person in sight was the proprietress, a bedraggled woman carrying a baby with large gold rings in its ears. Her husband was a boatman she informed me. With this she crossed to the back door and shouted across the empty green expanse of rice fields. As though by magic a man appeared running hard and carrying a long pole. How much would he charge to take me to Albufera? Again there was the usual embarrassed silence. Encouraged by his wife he demanded fifteen pesetas. I offered ten and the bargain was clinched. For my benefit a wooden stool was swiftly transferred to a small boat of primitive build, innocent of paint or varnish, and the floor caked with mud.

The mouth of the canal was choked with craft. Regardless of consequences my host of the fonda began to force a passage by poling vigorously. Apparently his boat was accustomed to giving as well as receiving hard knocks, and finally emerged in clearer water none the worse for its rough handling. Thereafter it glided along the weed clogged water with a swishing sound. Reeds fringed the side of the canal. Beyond stretched rice fields. It was very flat, silent and monotonous. Far off against the horizon grey mountains rose and fell in an irregular circle. The drowsy hush of the hot afternoon was unbroken save by the twittering of invisible birds and the hum of countless insects. Dragon flies, with iridescent wings, skimmed the brown surface of the water. The tall cream coloured sail of a fishing smack advanced slowly. Further on a solitary angler sat on the bank. His open red umbrella rested upside down on the reeds and was weighted with fish. A few small white power houses, each with a high brick chimney, were dotted about the rice fields. One stood on the brink of the canal. Through the open door came the lurid light of a furnace. Silhouetted against the flames was the dark restless form of a man, who never paused in his task of adding fuel to the fire by flinging in great fagots of reed.

The channel widened. The rice fields melted into swamps. Almost imperceptibly we were upon Albufera the great

lagoon, sole survival of the sea, which once covered the coast plain of Valencia. It stretched, placid as a mirror, to mountains that faded from sapphire to grey. Behind them the pale yellow sun was setting. Its rays suffused the lake with faint flickering opal. Suddenly sky and pallid lagoon glowed with richest blue, and gold, and amethyst. Simultaneously the dull green of tree-clad banks, and floating weed grown islands brightened to emerald, as though to lighten the slowly moving sailing boats on their homeward way.

CHAPTER VII

ALICANTE, ELCHE AND MURCIA

RAILWAY travelling in Spain rather suggests a play, in which the acts are very short and the intervals tantalisingly long. A typical example is the journey of ten hours from Valencia to Alicante. More than half of the time is wasted at innumerable stations. However there are compensations. The scenery is some of the finest, most vivid and characteristic in the south. Romance is lent by old red towers, and Moorish castles, their battlements sharply silhouetted against the blue of the sky, on some commanding height. Others, again, crumble peacefully in the voluptuous sunshine of the plain, amid a languorous Oriental setting of green palms and white wells.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between barren mountain ridges and the luxuriant fertility of the plain at their feet. There is a sinister suggestion in the desolation of the skeleton rocks, a menace to the fair beauty of the vale, with its spendthrift profusion of almonds, roses, and geraniums, its wheatfields, vineyards, locust beans, olive and orange groves. Gradually the spirit of the desert triumphs. The train enters a narrow defile, flanked by precipitous cliffs, to emerge amid stony treeless hills. These give place to a small valley laboriously planted with tomatoes and other vegetables. Then follows yet another richly cultivated stretch of huerta.

Every little station presents an animated scene. Baskets, sacks and frails of plaited rope litter the platforms, which are crowded with noisy restless multitudes. Two or three of the Guardia Civile are always on watch, conspicuous figures in their bright yellow and grey uniforms, and shiny black leather hats. Third class carriages have seats placed lengthwise on the roof, which is protected by a railing. These are well patronised although the shaking must be severe.

A castle-crowned hill guards the approach to Denia, the ancient Iberian city colonised, in turn, by Phoenicians from

Marseilles, and Greeks. The latter built a Temple of Diana, modelled on that of Ephesus, at the foot of the height now dominated by the brown citadel. Civilisation has contributed factory chimneys. These mingle with the palms rising above the modern town, that slopes steeply down to a little blue harbour.

Here it was necessary to change stations and re-book by the newly opened line. For a while the train ran inland out of sight of the sea. Arid hills rose on the left. The lower reaches of the mountains, on the right, lent themselves to terrace cultivation. Oft recurring watch towers showed on the higher peaks. Occasionally the yawning red mouth of a cave gaped in the cliff side. The line pursued a circuitous course as it wound continuously upward through tunnels, their darkness unrelieved by a light in the carriage. The scenery was wild and strange until open country was reached.

At Teulado women were selling baskets made of fig leaves, deftly pinned together and filled with delicious nectarines, for thirty centimos. Thereafter glimpses of sea were caught between great headlands. One immense protruding rock, the Penon de Ffach, rose from the encircling blue, as though some petrified grey monster of the deep were about to advance upon Calpe, the town of brown roofed houses huddled on the shore. It bore a striking resemblance to Gibraltar, although on a smaller scale.

In places the railway line was cut in the face of the cliffs overhanging the sea. From the train window was a sheer drop to translucent depths patterned with the black of submerged rocks, and weed, varied by pools that deepened from the crystalline hues of aquamarine to the clouded green of jade. At Altea wheat grew right down to the water's edge, a beautiful and dazzling combination of yellow and ultramarine. Finally Alicante was reached shortly after four o'clock. The station lies on the sea shore. As I stepped on to the platform the sound of hammering floated across the drowsy stillness of the hot afternoon, from neighbouring stocks, where two large wooden vessels were in course of construction.

The usual hotel omnibus was absent. In its place was a queer old yellow victoria drawn by a mule. For coachman it had a dark gipsy lad of about twelve. Two other passengers had already taken their seats, an elderly squint eyed man with an immense goitre on the side of his neck, and his small grandson, a stodgy faced little boy of eight, with an unduly elongated chin.

My room at the Hotel Simon looked across three rows of palms and the railway line to the sea. The harbour was full of shabby coasting steamers, some trim white naval cutters and a number of fishing smacks.

Admirers of Alicante declare that it improves with acquaintance. Whatever its charm for residents, it holds few attractions for the average traveller, and none for the tourist. In common with all Spanish towns it boasts a fine tree shaded promenade, the favourite resort alike of poor and rich. Known as the Paseo de Martires it stretches along the sea front between lines of palms. Near its southern end a conspicuous white building, of Moorish design, stands on the brink of the water. This is the Regatta Club, its exterior effectively decorated with putty coloured tiles stamped with geometrical devices and Arabic inscriptions.

Tramcars, drawn by skeleton mules usually three abreast, run along the road flanking the esplanade on the landside. Here the pavement is lined with cafés and the customary small tables and chairs. The northern end of the Paseo is little frequented. All view of the sea is blocked by a succession of unsightly piers and hideous bathing establishments. Above rises an abrupt yellow cliff topped by the fortified castle of Santa Barbara.

Alicante is seen at its best on a Sunday, when the local market takes place. The town is thronged with country people. Booths line the principal square and overflow into all the adjacent streets. Fantastically clad men, in glittering costumes, ride about on sorry looking horses doomed to figure in the arena, at the bull fight, in the afternoon.

A favourite excursion is to Santa Faz, famous for its convent of Santa Clara, and the treasured handkerchief of Santa Veronica, whereon is impressed the Saviour's face. I went out to it by a tram drawn by a wreck of a horse, and three starved and jaded old mules. From these pathetic objects it was a relief to turn to a herd of fine goats, each wearing a deep leather collar, jingling bells, and a muzzle. A woman was leading them from house to house. Before every door she stopped and milked the amount required by her customer, who stood on the step keeping a vigilant eye on the operation. If, for my sins, I should be doomed to reincarnate as an animal, in Spain, I trust that it may be as a goat. The fate of the others is too awful to contemplate.

The country immediately behind Alicante is a limestone wilderness of barren white hills and chalky tableland. A few

almond trees manage to grow, otherwise it is arid and stone strewn. Beyond, hidden from sight by the sterile ridge, a radiant plain stretches verdant to the sea. Great gardens, filled with a profusion of flowers and trees, surround pleasant country mansions. The gates thereto are imposingly emblazoned with coronets and coats of arms. Midway across the green oasis rises the glittering blue dome of the Convent of Santa Faz. I was admitted by a side door to the gloomy splendour of the church. The chill air was fragrant with roses grown by the nuns of Saint Claire in the secret sweetness of their cloistered garden. The ancient priest donned a lace trimmed surplice before introducing me to the mystery of a small dark chapel. Many times and low he bowed before the altar, then climbed a ladder and unlocked the door of a golden shrine. At this he bade me ascend and look in. The light of the taper flickered in his hand. Straining my eyes I dimly discerned a wan white face, the temples encircled by a crown of thorns. This was the Santa Faz impressed on the handkerchief, wherewith Saint Veronica wiped the sweat from the brow of the crucified Saviour.

Afterwards the sacristan bade me follow him to a small inner hall. Here an invisible speaker interrogated me in a sweet feminine voice. Unfortunately the high bred Castilian was unintelligible to me. After a brief while the revolving screen in the wall swung round. On its tray lay a farewell gift, a little picture of the Santa Faz.

A day is sufficient to exhaust the sights of Elche. Beyond its palm groves there is little to see. These have proved extremely fascinating to various celebrated literary travellers, who have dilated upon their charms in terms which appear exaggerated to those familiar with the immense palm topes of Southern India. As a matter of fact the scenery is very much like that of Quilon and other parts of Travancore. The little pink station, of a single platform, is set in the midst of densely growing palms. A dusty white road winds down hill to the old provincial town, once a place of importance but now shabby, dilapidated and dull. The flat roofs of its white dwellings, and the blue dome of the large church of Santa Maria, combine with the palms, and the sand to lend it an Oriental character. To all appearances it is a Moorish city, and yet nearly nine hundred years have elapsed since James the Conqueror, King of Aragon, brought about its conversion to Christianity, by discreetly dropping "three hundred byzants" into the sleeve of one of its Muhammadan

notables, who, thereupon, yielded up the city. Seemingly gates were barred with gold, and opened to golden keys long before Tennyson uttered his inspired lament.

In the narrow cobble paved alley of Alfonso XII a man sat in front of his house industriously working away at the rope soles of *espartatas*, the primitive shoes worn by peasantry. He told me that his daily output was thirteen dozen pairs. A little further on three girls were seated on stools under the shadow of a white wall. They were busy with needle and string stitching canvas tops on to these selfsame soles, as though their lives depended upon the speed with which the task was accomplished.

To visitors the most attractive place in Elche is the beautiful garden of Don Juan Orto Milares. In reality this is a glorified date grove. Long narrow paths lose themselves amid the dancing lights and shadows of the green labyrinth roofed over with brilliant azure. The sunshine filters through blue interstices in the spreading leaves to pattern the pale brown earth with shifting arabesque designs of gold, the source whence skilful Moorish masons of old drew their inspiration for pierced marble screen, mosaic floor and fretted lattice.

The glory of the garden is the *Palmera del Capellan Castano*, a remarkable tree that is sixty years old. At about two and a half feet from the ground its central trunk is surrounded by seven others, which spring from it after the manner of branches. Among the trees are some the leaves of which are rolled up tightly, umbrella-wise, and bound round with rope. This bleaches them in preparation for Palm Sunday, when the branches are blessed by the Priest, and distributed among the congregation, who carry them home and fasten them to the balconies of their houses, as a safeguard against lightning. Only male palms are treated in this summary fashion. An interval of four years must elapse between each operation of the kind. They blossom in May, when their pollen is sprinkled over the female, which bears its fruit every second winter and yields about seventy-five pounds, so that, from November on, dates are plentiful in Elche.

A short walk brought me to the Villa Carmen. The owner, a lady, resides chiefly in Madrid. During her absence visitors are admitted to the tower of her house on payment of a small fee. It is worth climbing the stairs to see the view. On three sides stretches the most extensive palm grove in Europe. Far off to the east, at Santa Paola, glistens the sea. The old town lies to the west, dominated by the blue dome of

Santa Maria and around, faint against the horizon, curves an amphitheatre of brown hills. Most of the great mediæval buildings have been allowed to fall into a dilapidated condition, among them the Calandra. This, the once splendid palace of the Dukes of Altamia, is now divided up into little shops and tenements. A quaint survival of more picturesque days is the wooden figure of a serving man dressed in the livery of the sixteenth century. The dummy stands in the belfry as though in the act of ringing the bell. Near by the Vinalpo, reduced to a mere stream in June, trickles between steep sandy banks crossed by the old stone bridge of the Virgin and two modern ones.

For much of the way I was followed by the usual crowd of children. They took a keen interest in my camera, and drove off some gipsies, who had come begging, by throwing stones at them, a delicate attention which I appreciated for, in Spain, the demands upon the charitable are never ending, and tax alike both purse and patience.

It was 7.30 p.m. when I reached Murcia. The spell of the setting sun lay upon the land flooding the barren mountain ridges with the deep, clear pink radiance of dying day in the desert. Outside the station the Hotel Patron's bus was waiting, drawn by two powerful black horses. Their jingling bells sounded a cheerful welcome. They had heavy work of it over a bad road, where the deep holes were concealed beneath thick white dust. Matters were little better in the narrow cobble paved streets of the town. Here the sides of the bus literally scraped the walls.

The hotel turned out to be a very old mansion and typically Spanish. Situated in the heart of the city, close to the Cathedral, it had probably been the palace of some nobleman. It was built about a large central hall, in reality a roofed over patio, encircled by a gallery and the windows of dark inner rooms. Hardly had I taken my seat at a small table, and ordered a limon helada, than I was assailed by the inevitable bootblack. Owing to the dusty state of the roads the majority of Spaniards appear to devote most of their time, in public, to having their shoes cleaned. During the process I was approached by three vendors of state lottery tickets. Even the bootblack wound up by producing a book of them and endeavouring to sell me one for five pesetas.

Wheeled traffic is not allowed in the main thoroughfares, the Calle del Principe Alfonso and the Plateria. These are mere narrow alleys paved with the customary abominable

cobble stones, and lined with high flat roofed houses. The shop windows display a tempting array of rich pastries, gaily painted fans, large ornamental combs and glittering jewellery. Overhead, from roof and balcony, stretch "toldos," or awnings of much patched brown canvas. Refuse is swept into the middle of the street. All day long, and far into the night these popular thoroughfares are crowded. Pale faced Senoras, in black, pass along, fan in hand, to pray in the cool incense laden silence of the great whispering Cathedral. Close behind them follow blue bloused countrymen weighed down by heavy loads of hemp. A butcher boy pushes a wheelbarrow filled with meat, a man with a large basket solicits alms, and watercarriers go from door to door delivering brimming putty coloured earthenware vessels of Roman form, which taper to a sharp point at the base.

The Cathedral is entered, from the west, by double metal doors under a rounded arch. The lofty façade is decorated with rococo figures executed by Jaime Bort in the eighteenth century. Near by, to north, rises the great belfry, a splendid and imposing landmark. It bears an inscribed tablet stating that it was begun by the Emperor Charles and completed on October 19th, 1521. Modern stained glass windows, in execrable taste, mar the grandeur of the interior. The enclosed choir takes up less space than usual. Its outer walls are lined with chapels. In one, to right, a beautiful painting of the Virgin attracts a never ending procession of worshippers. Her altar is covered with humble offerings—a withered magnolia in a marmalade pot stamped Keiller, Dundee, and a nightlight in a rusty tin.

The high altar is splendidly decorated with metal repoussé work, while the apse is lined with gorgeously coloured and gilt figures. Immediately to north of it, in a closed wall recess, is the heart of Alfonso, the Scholar King who, in 1266, incorporated Murcia in the realm of Castile. Prior to that it had been a powerful Moorish state under the Beni Had dynasty. Its dominions had extended across the peninsula and had included Cordova and Seville. The Cathedral occupies the site of the former Muhammadan Mosque.

After the Cathedral the most imposing edifice is the great pink three storeyed Palace of the Archbishop, the grey stone columns of its patio aglow with purple bourgainvillier. Prior to its transfer to Murcia the episcopal seat was at Cartagena, said to have been originally that of the metropolitan itself. before Toledo claimed the distinction.

A wide avenue, planted with plane and casuarina trees, leads to the Theatre Romea. The interior is richly decorated in white and gold. Four tiers of red upholstered seats rise to the ceiling, which is decorated with paintings of Murcia encircled by allegorical figures, above a frieze surrounded by portrait medallions of Spanish dramatists. The drop curtain displays three different coats of arms borne by the city at various epochs. Exactly opposite, a resplendent canopy of crimson and gold distinguishes the Governor's box. The general effect is bright and luxurious.

As in other countries Spanish drama originated with pastoral, and mystery plays, of a religious character, acted on the eve of church festivals. The earliest, of a secular nature, appear to have been written in the dialect of Valencia, and to have imitated the bardic efforts of Provence, that classical land of minstrels. These crude attempts were soon eclipsed by works in the Castilian language. Nothing of real merit, however, was produced until the fifteenth century, when Rodriguez de Cots won fame with "Calixtus and Melibeus." Contemporary dramatists were the Marquis of Villena and Juan de Enzini. A play by the latter was acted, in 1474, during the wedding festivities of Ferdinand and Isabella, at Valladolid. These and other authors continued to slavishly model their works upon Greek tragedies and Latin comedies, until life and reality were introduced by such men of genius as Cervantes, Calderon and Lopez de Vega. The last named had some two thousand plays to his credit. As a result the Spanish theatre attained European pre-eminence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and exerted an influence over the drama in France, Italy and England.

Old time travellers in the peninsula bitterly deplored the activities of the prompter who, candle in hand, darted about the stage to hover on the left of whichever character was speaking. Even in the early nineteenth century he was still a prominent figure. Installed in a well, in the middle of the scene, with the book of words open in front of him, he read the piece aloud in a monotonous singsong, which the actors followed as best they might. The effect of two voices repeating the same words was most distracting to the audience.

In the market place stands the Ermita de Jesus, an old yellow building surmounted by a squat round tower roofed with tiles and growing weeds. Despite its humble and rather unprepossessing exterior, the chapel attracts many visitors for it contains a unique collection of the works of Francisco

Sarzillo, the celebrated wood carver born at Murcia in 1707. This consists of a series of seven magnificent processional groups, in which the figures are the size of life, and glow with warm colour. Entrance is obtained by knocking repeatedly at the door of a small pink house to right. A bearded sacristan leads the way. / The first group depicts the Betrayal. Judas is portrayed in the act of kissing Christ. A Roman soldier lies on the ground and Peter stands with drawn sword. An inscribed tablet states that the work was executed in 1763 at a cost of eight thousand six hundred and two reals. Another fine model, by the same artist, represents Christ falling under the weight of the cross. The central figure is clad in a stiff gown of purple and gold brocade. Finally visitors are shown a crayon portrait of Salzillo. The famous wood carver is depicted wearing a curly bobtail wig tied with an immense black bow. The face is long, the under lip prominent and the expression mild and pensive. A number of small carved groups, by his son, form the chief attraction of the Museum, a new building of putty coloured stone in the long dusty Plaza del Obispo Fruttas. In Spain the cathedrals and churches are the repositories of such a wealth of art treasure as to form the real museums. Compared with them any others seem in the nature of an anti-climax.

CHAPTER VIII

GRANADA

MY last impression of Murcia was of motley crowds, the din of a thronged railway station, of heat and flowers, of confusion, rush and delay. The train was due to start for Granada at 8 a.m. Long before the appointed time a formidable queue was drawn up in front of the booking office. As usual only one was open. It was Saturday and the place overflowed with country people and market produce. Women, in deeply fringed shawls of black silk gaily embroidered with flowers, bright earrings and high tortoiseshell combs, strove to sell tight little nosegays of roses, or carnations bordered with box and mounted upon long slender sticks. Others offered big magnolias, their heavy cream petals tied about with hemp, and towering bouquets, many hued and fragrant, built up of three graduated tiers. Boys darted about selling rolls with hard boiled eggs fitted into the tops, and held in place by twists of crust. Children, with whining voices, led about a host of blind beggars, and vendors, of all ages, sought to dispose of lottery tickets. Further colour was lent by the blue and gold uniforms of naval officers returning to Cartagena and the round scarlet caps, wreathed with gold foliage, of post office officials.

At last it was all over. I had shaken off the final beggar, a noseless cripple, and escaped the infliction of a bouquet a yard in height by taking instead a particularly fragrant and beautiful magnolia. The train moved slowly out of Murcia just forty-five minutes "behind time," as an American fellow traveller expressed it. For a while the scenery was a somewhat monotonous repetition of barren ochre coloured ridges and verdant plain. Conspicuous amid the vegetation were the silky yellow flowers of cactus, not the pale lemon tint to which we are accustomed in India, but a rich glowing orange. The oft recurring little wayside stations were pleasantly green with acacia trees.

Lorca was reached at midday. There was a rush for lunch

at the Cantina. Proceedings were unduly prolonged by the fact that each hungry customer had to possess his soul in patience while eggs were specially fried for him. The indispensable egg course was followed by fish, veal cutlets, salad and fruit, all of which had to be swallowed within the limited space of twenty minutes.

Soon after leaving Lorca the train crossed into Andalusia. Almost immediately the face of the country changed. The radiant plain was succeeded by sandy desert, boulder strewn, and cut up by ravines. The only relief was afforded by scanty tufts of coarse grass. For a couple of hours we travelled through this arid wilderness. It was pleasant to emerge in a verdant highland, where fat pigs dozed contentedly under the shade of fig trees. The respite was but temporary. Very soon the train was back in a desolate region of barren hills and prickly pear, occasionally varied by a brief patch of wheat, or tall vines, their outspread branches trained across wires.

As the line climbed slowly up the mountains the scenery grew increasingly wild. At last even poplars, figs and venturesome pines were left behind. Nature showed herself naked and unashamed, as though to challenge man's vaunted supremacy. The seamed, scarred and riven peaks were distorted into fantastic shapes. Sometimes the train halted, as though out of breath, to allow passengers to alight on the rail near two or three rudely built stone huts, their flat roofs gay with brilliantly coloured geraniums planted in tin pails. Every now and then an old woman appeared, green flag in hand, on guard before a crossing closed by chains. Then, mirage-like, a vast tableland came into sight, green with wheat and red with poppies. As the breeze swept over the oasis the tall grain, and the flowers swayed with the long wave-like motion of a wind stirred lake.

At Baja the carriage was invaded by three very stout ladies, a mother and two daughters. They were dressed in unrelieved black, and were accompanied by two corpulent gentlemen in equally sombre attire. All carried immense bouquets of Ascension lilies. These they proceeded to suspend in mid air from the racks at either side of the compartment. It was very hot and the heavy fragrance of the flowers threatened to become overpowering. No sooner was the mother established in a corner than she required the window to be shut and the blind drawn. Then, completely enveloped in her mantilla, she lapsed into profound slumber.

Despite their size the daughters were extremely handsome. The elder was of the haughty, high nosed type of beauty which bespeaks Arab blood. The younger possessed non-descript features. She relied for good looks upon a splendid pair of dark eyes, and a complexion the gleaming pallor of mother o' pearl. From the outset it was evident that she, and the fatter of the two caballeros, were deeply enamoured of one another. He proceeded to pay her the most ardent but respectful court. Mindful of the claims of etiquette he first offered me a cigarette.

Spanish women do not smoke. They dress with nun-like severity and use neither cosmetics, nor perfumes to enhance their charms, in fact, they dispense altogether with artificial aids. Instead they rely upon the play of fine black eyes, the flash of white teeth and the sweetest and most winning of smiles. Their manners are an attractive blend of vivacity and reserve. Apparently they are as frank and trusting as children, and their men treat them with the chivalrous respect which they merit.

After awhile the elder daughter produced a capacious basket, and aroused her mother. Suddenly stimulated to action the good old lady fell enthusiastically to work. She was evidently a believer in the old axiom: "Fingers were made before forks." With a clasp knife she began to cut a lump of veal up into thick slices. These she laid on pieces of bread and handed all round. I was, of course, invited to participate. It is Spanish etiquette to offer. The same etiquette enjoins a courteous but firm refusal. Towards the close of the feast, for it was really on too lavish a scale to be otherwise described, both the daughters forced some chocolates, wrapped in silver paper, upon me. The gentlemen slaked their thirst with a modest draught of red wine. The ladies contented themselves with water carried in an earthenware jar of classical shape.

Attempts at conversation were not an unqualified success, although even the lovers made a laudable effort to render themselves intelligible to me. I was asked my impression of Spain, and the Spaniards, and whether I drank tea? The elder daughter informed me that society, in Madrid, had adopted the English custom out of compliment to the Queen, although they did not really like it. "So now," she added, "they all have tea at six o'clock, just as in England." She went on to say: "Our King dips his cake into his cup, as we do in Spain. When the Queen frowns at him and says:

'No! No! that is not right. You must hold your biscuit with the other hand and not dip it into the cup,' he laughs and replies: 'I am a Madrilenos and must eat as the Madrilenos do.'" This anecdote was received with great favour by the other members of the party. Spaniards have an Oriental fondness for anecdotes, which they tell dramatically and to the point.

Day was drawing to a close when the train emerged from the midnight darkness of a tunnel to a view of awe-inspiring grandeur. Far below spread a dim tree-dotted plain. Overhead iridescent clouds of amethyst and silver floated in a turquoise sky. On all sides stretched range upon range of grey mountains. Suddenly the sombre ridges fell apart to reveal the dazzling white summits of the snowclad Sierra Nevadas. Simultaneously the setting sun fired the horizon. The conflagration spread to the leaden hills causing them to glow like burnished copper. The clouds caught the reflection and swiftly turned from opal to flame, scorching the cold white face of the Sierra Nevadas, until it burned a deep rose red.

Then night fell. The train continued to thread its way amid narrow mountain passes, where the moonlight played with fantastic effect upon weirdly shaped rocks and sandy, boulder-strewn highlands. Now and then a yellow gleam, in the dark side of a precipice, shone forth from the mouth of a cave dwelling. Finally Granada was reached at 1 a.m. It had taken nearly seventeen hours to accomplish a journey of two hundred and three miles.

Soon I was in the omnibus being jolted over the cobble stones of the sleeping city, then uphill to the Alhambra, the romantic tree clad height girdled by the red walls and towers of the famous Moorish stronghold. The silver moonlight filtered through the tall elms planted by Wellington. Above the tramping of the horses, and the jingle of their bells, sounded the splash of running water. It reminded me very much of an Indian hill station, in fact, for a few drowsy moments, I had the illusion of being back again in the Himalayas.

My destination was the Washington Irving Hotel, so called from a tradition that the famous American author had resided in an old, and disused portion of the building. The situation is an admirable one at the foot of the steep winding Calle del Cimitario midway between the Moorish palace of the Alhambra, and the hardly less celebrated Generalife, once the summer residence of the King and his harem.

Exactly opposite stands the Hotel de los Siete Suelos, where Augustus Harc stayed in April, 1871. It is now an annexe of the Washington Irving. Meals are served in its tree planted patio. Here, on the morning after my nocturnal arrival, I breakfasted off coffee and rolls under the shadow of the massive battlements, and vast nasturtium-hued tower of Siete Suelos, or Seven Floors. Through its low arched doorway Boabdil, the last Moorish monarch, passed out of his capital for ever, bearing with him all the art, science, culture and romantic chivalry, which had constituted the glory of Muhammadan Spain. One favour he craved of Ferdinand and Isabella before departing. This was that the portal, through which he and his court issued forth to exile and death, might be closed behind them and never used again. The conquerors could well afford to grant so humble a boon. To this day the door has remained blocked.

The ruined condition of the immense tower, and adjoining ramparts is due to the French, who essayed to blow up the fortress in 1812 when compelled to evacuate Granada by Wellington. Nature, ever ready to cloak the evidence of man's violence with kindly green, has clothed the wrecked masonry with flowering weeds, bush and bramble. Now, by a curious irony of fate, little tables occupy the site of tragic memories. Light hearted tourists drink their wine, and make merry in the sun-speckled shade of the trees on the very ground, where one of the most poignant and dramatic scenes in history was enacted.

Ever fertile Spanish tradition has invested the tower of Seven Floors with the romantic glamour of buried treasure. The popular belief that vast accumulations of hidden wealth lie deep in the foundations of the Torre de los Siete Suelos inspired Washington Irving's quaint and delightful tale, "The Moor's Legacy."

The Alhambra enclosure is entered by the Puerta de los Granadas, a massive stone gateway adorned with punch work. The arched opening is surmounted by heraldic devices. Among them figure the arms of Charles V, the double eagles of Austria, and three pomegranates. The fruit, whence Granada derives its name and its crest, is depicted as slightly open. The two halves typify the opposing hills whereon were built the Albacin, the old royal seat of the Zirite dynasty, and the Alhambra, the splendid headquarters of the last Moorish kings. The seeds are symbolical of the inhabitants.

Houses, and a steep cobble paved street, called after the

once famous Moorish family of Gomeres, run right up to the gate. Here, however, the town ceases abruptly. Within is the green silence of an elm forest traversed by steep sun-flecked paths, up and down which domadores, in high crowned wide brimmed hats, gallop at a breakneck pace on light coloured Barbary steeds, with flowing manes and sweeping tails. In striking contrast to these reckless riders is the slow, and sober gait of an occasional fat priest seated almost on the tail of a diminutive donkey, ascending to the cemetery on the hill top.

To left winds the Cuesta Empedrada, the original approach to the Palace. This leads to the renowned Gate of Justice, where petty causes were settled after the primitive method employed in Old Testament days. The outer horseshoe arch of the portal displays an engraved hand—potent talisman against the evil eye and all the disasters attendant thereon. The inner arch has a key carved on it. Popular superstition avers that both key and hand are magic symbols employed by the monarch who built the gate. When the latter shall stretch down and clasp the former, the protecting spell will be broken, and the Alhambra will collapse, a shapeless ruin.

Finally the Plaza de los Ajates is reached, a picturesque open court, which has retained something of the atmosphere of other days. It derives its name of Place of the Cisterns from an immense underground reservoir constructed by the Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, and filled from the Darro. On its eastern side stands the so-called Palace of Charles V, a monarch who had a mania for erecting one building within another. In this case he sacrificed much of the Alhambra to the indulgence of his whim. The offending edifice is a large, two storeyed building of reddish yellow stone in the form of a square. The lower half is faced with protruding blocks characterised by punch work. Florid carvings of fruit and urns frame the upper row of windows. The door is surmounted by marble angels, an imperial crown and the coat of arms of Charles V. Further decoration takes the form of finely carved marble medallions representing battle scenes. The roofless interior is circular, and consists of an open arena surrounded by galleries for spectators. From this it is evident that Charles V never intended his so-called Palace as a residence, but as a place for tilts, tourneys and bull fights. The last named must not for a moment be confounded with what now masquerades under the name. Bull

fighting, as practised in mediæval Spain, was a knightly exercise of arms. As such it was an exclusive prerogative of the nobility, by whom it was regarded as a means of encouraging skilful horsemanship and a dexterous use of the spear. The caballero entered the ring alone. He was mounted and carried a lance. That the chances were not all on his side is conclusively proved by old records which show that, in 1512, no less than ten knights lost their lives in a bull fight.

Immediately to the north of the Emperor's great yellow pile a modest door admits to the mysterious precincts of the Alhambra. The entrance is commonplace, almost disappointing. It consists of a narrow, brick paved vestibule at the further extremity of which tickets of admittance are issued on payment of a small fee. Another moment and the visitor steps, as though by enchantment, into the East of the Arabian Nights. He is no longer in a matter of fact world, but in a wonderland, where all things seem possible. The very sunlight appears to shed an additional glamour over the white marble court, myrtle hedges and long green tank, in the translucent depths of which gold fish dart, hither and thither, like gleams of imprisoned flame. The stranger resists the impulse to rub his eyes lest, by so doing, the fair scene should vanish. The beauty of it holds his senses in thrall with a spell as potent as that exercised by the fragrance of flowers, or the swelling strains of music.

At either end stretch arcades roofed with gleaming tiles—amethyst, emerald and sapphire. Fluted arches, adorned with lace-like moulding, spring from slender marble pillars remarkable for the elaboration of their sculptured capitals, under ceilings of gilt and coloured cedar inlaid with mother o' pearl. Inscriptions tell how this charmed court, the Patio de la Alberca, was constructed by Muhammad V, the celebrated warrior who recaptured Algeciras in 1368. Its northern face is dominated by a small tiled dome with glittering brass pinnacle, behind which rises a large crenelated tower of faded red, capped by a low cupola and flagstaff. This is the famous Tower of Comares, so named after its Arabian architect, who planted its foundations deep in the valley below. Its topmost storey is on a level with the courtyard and contains the Hall of the Ambassadors. First, however, the Sala de la Barca must be traversed, a long antechamber, which owes its appellation to a lofty wooden ceiling shaped like the hull of a vessel. An arched opening, flanked by

shrine-like recesses, where Moorish courtiers deposited their shoes before entering the royal presence, leads into the Hall of Ambassadors. The lofty walls are encircled by a dado of brilliant tiles, above which they are completely covered with exquisitely delicate and varied stucco arabesques picked out with colour and gilding. Larch wood, inset with gleaming mother o' pearl, forms the high domed ceiling. The floor is paved with large red bricks and small blue and white tiles, in effective combination. Eight beautiful arched windows are sunk in deep alcoves hollowed in the massive masonry. The one in the centre was a favourite resort of Washington Irving's. The great American writer describes the many hours he lingered there viewing the fair scene, and repeopling it with Moorish potentates, Christian knights and the frail beauties of long ago.

The Hall of Ambassadors was the state apartment of the Moorish Kings, whose throne stood on the north side facing the arched entrance. It was built by Yusuf I (1333-54), a powerful ruler during whose reign the Muhammadans succeeded in recapturing Gibraltar. From under its domed roof the fierce King Abul Hassan hurled defiance at Queen Isabella when, in 1476, her Ambassador arrived to demand payment of the annual tribute due to Castile. The Moorish monarch replied that the mints of Granada no longer coined gold for the Christians but steel. It was a rash boast. Just fifteen years later his son, Boabdil, convoked the last national council, which the Moors ever held in the Hall of Ambassadors, to consider the terms of surrender offered by the victorious Isabella.

It was in a dungeon of the Comares Tower that Boabdil had been confined as a lad. His mother, the high-spirited Queen Ayesha, was imprisoned in a vaulted cell close by. The trouble arose through King Abul Hassan's infatuation for his young and beautiful Spanish wife, Isabel de Solis, a lady of noble family who, upon embracing the faith of her Muhammadan husband, had received the romantic name of Zoroya, or Morning Star. Quarrels between the two Queens led Abul Hassan to imprison the elder, together with her son Boabdil, the heir to the throne, in vaulted chambers under the Hall of Ambassadors. They profited by his temporary absence to escape, by means of knotted scarves, to the ravine below.

To east of the Patio de la Alberca lies the Lion Court, of sinister repute, the scene of the massacre of the Abencerrages.

It is reached through the Sala de los Mozarabes, the heavy stone ceiling of which is in ponderous contrast to the light and fragile decorations characteristic of the Moorish palace. This is due to a powder explosion, in 1591, which shattered the interior of the pavilion, and resulted in its ceiling being renewed in Renaissance style.

Marble steps descend to the gravel strewn court. Narrow marble channels run from the four points of the compass to a shallow central platform, whereon twelve stiff-kneed, blunt-nosed lions stand, back to back, supporting a large sixteen sided basin of yellowish stone engraved, about the rim, with Arabic inscriptions. A spout, whence water gushes on Sundays, protrudes from each mouth. It would be difficult to imagine less flattering representations of the King of Animals than these lions, which give a name to the world famed court. A second smaller basin rises above the first and, finally, a slender spiral fountain. All around extend graceful pillared arcades decorated, inside and out, with lace-like arabesques, which convey the impression of being carved in marble. As a matter of fact the work is all done in plaster, a material in the art of cutting, hardening and moulding which the Arabs were past masters.

Projecting pavilions advance on the east and west. The former is surmounted by a dome of gaily coloured tiles, and leads through to the Sala de Justicia remarkable for the elaborate stucco work of its many arches. Interesting paintings, on leather, are fitted into recesses in the back wall. The centremost depicts the ten rulers of Granada from Muhammad I, the deposed Emir of Jaen, who transferred his headquarters thence to the Alhambra, to Abu Said, obit 1362. A large marble water trough is carved with lions, horses with human faces, and horned animals, in defiance of the Mosaic law whereby Muhammadans, in common with Jews, are forbidden to make unto themselves graven images, or "the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath or the water under the earth." A number of alabaster coffin lids are ranged in an adjoining alcove near the Puerta della Rauda, whence steps lead down to the sepulchral vaults of the Moorish monarchs, in whose time the Sala de Justicia was the Supreme Court over which the King presided in person. The law was administered according to the precepts laid down in the Koran. Sentences were promptly executed. When the Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, first occupied the Alhambra they

temporarily converted the Sala de Justicia into the chapel Royal.

The Hall of the Abencerrages stands on the south side of the Lion Court. Its lofty honeycomb dome, and the blood-stained marble basin of its tragic fountain are still intact. Here, according to tradition, which ever delights in recording the sanguinary and sinister, Boabdil wreaked terrible vengeance upon one of the noblest families in his realm. The tale is a variation of the world old theme embodied in the moral "Cherchez la femme." All the trouble began with a lovers' quarrel. Two rivals sought the favour of the same lady. One belonged to the renowned house of the Abencerrages, and the other to that of the equally powerful Zegrís. They came face to face at a court function in the Alhambra. Both were armed, as befitted their rank and the war-like spirit of the times. Naturally enough scimitars were soon flashing. The keen blade of the Abencerrage bit deeper than that of his opponent, who fell mortally wounded. Thus a blood feud was engendered which tended to hasten the downfall of the Moorish dominions. Resolved upon vengeance the Zegrís sought secret audience of the King, and informed him that a guilty intrigue was in progress between his young and beautiful wife, Queen Morayma, and Hamet, Chief of the Abencerrages. According to their account the Queen and her lover met under the protecting shade of a giant yew in the harem gardens of the Generalife.

Boabdil gave no sign of resentment. Upon the pretext of state affairs he summoned the Abencerrages to the Palace. A strong band of Zegrís was mounted in the Lion Court. The ill-fated Abencerrages were ushered singly to the royal presence. Boabdil awaited them in the Hall, which bears their name. Beside his throne stood the executioner. As each unsuspecting victim entered he was seized and his head struck off over the marble basin in the centre. Visitors are still shown the rusty red stain made by their blood. Thirty-six had perished in this way, when a page made his escape and warned the remainder of the doom which threatened them.

Such, in brief, is the tragic story which, for seven hundred years, has invested the beautiful court with the sinister fascination ever exercised by the dramatic and terrible.

Exactly opposite is the Sala de los Hermanos, or Two Sisters, so called from twin slabs of white marble let into its floor at either side of a sunken fountain, and narrow water-

course. This passion for running water is a marked feature of Moslem domestic architecture. It is equally characteristic of early Muhammadan edifices in India, and is repeated, with undiminished enthusiasm, in the later Moghul palaces erected by Akbar, and his descendants, at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Delhi. Probably it originated in the enforced religious observance of frequent ablutions, for the Muhammadan must wash before and after meals, and as a prelude to his five daily times of prayer.

The Hall of Two Sisters is believed to have formed part of the winter residence of the Harem who, apparently, depended for heat upon charcoal braziers. It is the most beautifully decorated apartment in the palace. A dado of brilliant tiling encircles the walls, which continue upward in a mass of delicate and ingenious tracery designs executed in stucco, intermingled with Arabic inscriptions. They are ringed at the top by sixteen arched windows, above which the dome rises in a bewildering series of little cells, one over the other, in rich hues of ruby, turquoise and gold. Although obviously inspired by a honeycomb the architect has improved upon that master builder, the bee. In his ceiling there are no straight lines, and no monotonous regularity. The innumerable small shrines group themselves into scallops, retreat and advance, mount and descend, until it seems that the wonderful task had been assigned to a swarm of skilfully drilled insects, and that butterflies, their wings serving as palettes, had been employed to lay on the colour. Even Time has enhanced the marvels of this unique ceiling, the largest Arab roof of the kind in existence. Where the cells are broken the pendant fragments assume the aspect of stalactites, and actually add to the effect.

In one corner stands a large blue and gold vase adorned with quaint gazelles and Arab mottoes. One winged handle is missing. Tradition avers that, when the Alhambra passed to the Christians, this jar was found hidden away and filled to the brim with treasure.

A romantic tower, known as the Pinador de la Reina, is perched on the dizzy summit of the high red bastion built by Yusuf I. The Dressing Room of the Queen is a small square room occupied by the young and beautiful Elizabeth of Parma when, as bride of Philip V, she visited the Alhambra. Its marble walls are pierced by nine decorative windows, and further adorned with paintings of fat cupids, and scenes from the sixteenth century campaign in Tunis. A narrow

pillared balcony runs round the exterior above a sheer precipice of considerable depth. The adjoining room displays a notice, on a locked door which bars access to the Palace Archives, to the effect that the suite was lived in by Washington Irving—immortal chronicler of the Alhambra—in 1829. A neighbouring door leads through to the long narrow dining room of Charles V hence the panelled walls, with inscriptions relating to that Emperor, and the fireplace, with its heavy dragons and cherub heads.

The windows look down upon the sombre cypress trees, tall myrtle hedges and central fountain of the Patio de Daraxa, whence opens a series of low vaulted brick chambers, cool, dim and restful. By some trick of acoustics the faintest whisper, breathed in one corner of the largest of the rooms, is distinctly heard by anyone posted in another. Hard by is the Hammam, an Arab version of the luxurious baths of ancient Rome. In the Sala de Camas, or Repose, are recesses for divans. Here the bathers lie on soft mattresses listening to the voluptuous strains of musicians posted in the gallery above, their senses further soothed by fragrant perfumes and the dexterous passes of skilled masseurs. Their eyes feasted meanwhile on the glowing colours, gold work and varied designs of the tracery on the walls, or gazed upwards at the clear blue of the sky visible through star-like openings in the domed ceiling. Beyond again are small apartments fitted with deep marble baths, the water for which gushed through holes in the perforated wall.

Not far distant is the Mexuar, or Moorish Council Chamber converted into a chapel in 1537. Behind the altar are the remains of an original door. The plaster ornamentation of its horseshoe arch is much defaced. A second portal admits to the old Masjid of the Muhammadan sovereigns. The deep and elaborately decorated recess, to south-east, is the Mihrab and determines the direction of Mecca, the point to which all followers of the Prophet must turn in prayer. As he bent low before it Yusuf I, the greatest of Granada's rulers, was murdered by a madman, who plunged a scimitar in his back. This portion of the palace has suffered considerably from earthquake.

On leaving the charmed precincts of the Alhambra I directed my steps to the adjacent Alcazaba, or citadel, a picturesque pile enclosed by red battlements and overlooked by massive towers. Entrance is by two small doors at the south-east corner of the Place of Cisterns. A narrow garden

extends along the outer line of ramparts planted with palms, magnolias and a riot of gaily coloured, sweetly smelling flowers. On its northern side rises a high inner wall curtained with climbing roses—red and white—and the blue blossoms of plumbago. From here a door, in a low square tower, leads through to an extensive court, its western end commanded by the lofty Torre de la Vela, or Keep.

Well worn steps ascend to the spacious roof encircled by a parapet, and dominated by a flagstaff and red brick belfry, whence swings a large bronze bell rung, at intervals during the night, to regulate the opening, and closing of the channels, which irrigate the vega, an old custom, that dates from Moorish times. An inscription states that here, on January 2nd A.D. 1492, in the seven hundred and seventy-seventh year of Arab domination, the victory was given to their Catholic Majesties, Isabella and Fernando, in token of which the three standards of the Castilian Army were raised on this, the loftiest point of the battlements, together with "los Santos Pendones" of Cardinals Gonzalez de Mendoza and Gutierrez de Cardenas, and the Royal Standard. The hour was 3 p.m. Simultaneously Fernando and Isabella were proclaimed monarchs of Granada.

It requires very little effort of imagination to picture the scene, the red and gold splendour of waving banners, the King of Aragon and Queen of Castile, both in armour, the crimson vestments of the Cardinals, the throng of priests and host of mailed warriors, all with their eyes fixed upon the great silver crucifix presented by Pope Sixtus IV and carried throughout the campaign in Ferdinand's tent, by whose orders it was affixed to the loftiest point of each fresh stronghold wrested from the Moors. The eight hundred years' war, between infidel invader and Christian, was at an end. The final phase had lasted for ten years. It had been regarded by Europe in the light of a crusade. Numbers of French, Germans and English had rallied to the standard of los Reyes Catolicos. Among them was Sir Edward Woodville, a brother-in-law of the Yorkist king, Edward IV.

In the spring of 1491 watchers, on the Torre de la Vela, saw the investing host pitch their tents in the sun-illuminated plain six miles to west of the city walls. The site is marked by the sleepy little country town of Santa Fe built by the army, when their camp burnt down, and said to be the only city in Spain "never contaminated by the Moorish heresy." From its walls a solitary horseman rode forth on an April

morning. His name was Christopher Columbus. Once again he had failed to inspire the Catholic sovereigns with confidence in a visionary project, he had formed, of discovering a new world in the unexplored ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Heavy hearted the Genoese navigator turned his horse's head towards France. At the old stone bridge of Pinos, under the hills bordering the plain to westward, a royal messenger overtook him with letters of recall. He returned to the great camp where the charter was signed which gave America to Spain.

In the rich vega, some five miles beyond Santa Fe, lies the estate of Soto de Roma, bestowed upon the Duke of Wellington by Fernando VII in recognition of the Field Marshal's services during the Peninsular War.

The southern entrance to the Palace of Charles V is flanked by four large iron cannon thrust into the ground with the nozzles upward. A little beyond these military trophies is the small church of Santa Maria. It occupies the site of the Jama Masjid, or principal Mosque of the Alhambra, in which the first Christian Mass was said after Boabdil's surrender to Ferdinand and Isabella. Further east lies the interesting enclosure known as Alhambra Alta. This contained the quarters of courtiers and officials. Here is a characteristic stone tank overlooked by two lions. In its green waters pious Moslems performed their ablutions before proceeding to pray in the little corner Mosque perched on the very edge of the red battlements. It is in a perfect state of preservation. The fretted walls are intact. The interior glows with rich colour and gleams with gold on fretted wall and ceiling.

Each of the lofty red towers, of the encircling fortifications, is the subject of romantic legend. Despite their frowning and war-like exteriors the interiors are surprisingly beautiful. That of Las Infantas is said to have been the royal residence of the Moorish princesses. Square, and of massive form, it is surmounted by an octagonal pavilion and pointed roof of brightly hued tiles. Within is an enchanted palace of domes, galleries, fountains and chambers covered with a wealth of decoration indescribably light and fantastical. These turrets and ramparts are all that have survived. Where once splendid edifices stood is now a wilderness overgrown with rank grass, aloes and iris. Even the famous monastery of San Francisco, the first erected after the conquest, is a ruin. The high altar of its church usurped the site of a chamber in

the palace built by Muhammad V. Under the choir Ferdinand and Isabella were laid to rest, until transferred to the Cathedral, in the lower town, in 1521.

High upon the hillside the white walls, and brown tiled roofs of the Generalife present the bare, almost forbidding appearance of a prison. Approach to the summer palace is by a long narrow cypress avenue flanked by streams of running water. The effect is sombre, almost funereal. The tall melancholy trees crowd shoulder to shoulder. From the meagre strip of blue sky visible overhead, the sun pours down slanting golden rays to pattern the buff coloured path with dancing lights and shadows. Finally a white portal is reached topped with classical urns gay with growing flowers. Then follow more cypresses, in two stiff rows. At either side of the causeway the ground drops in precipitous fashion. Across the chasm to left rise the red walls and towers of the Alhambra.

Clumps of feathery bamboo precede a little court and white faced palace. In one of the galleries hang portraits of the Marquesses of Granada—seventeen in all—and, in another, sixteen paintings of Kings and Queens of Spain. The delight of the Generalife is its terrace gardens, fountains, channels, tanks, pavilions and wealth of flowers and trees. No words could paint their variety and charm. I have seen nothing to compare with them except the famous Moghul gardens in Kashmir.

The trysting place of Queen Morayma and the Chief of the Abencerrages is in a secret Court screened by flower festooned walls, and reached by steep steps. Roses, jasmine and ivy fall, curtain-like, over the snow-white arcades of its shadowy verandah. Three jade-green tanks run down the centre linked by channels fringed with maiden hair, through which the water gushes from a dark pool fed by crystal rain that pours from the mossy roof of projecting rock. On the eastern side of the secluded pleasure stand three sentinel cypress. The first is very old. Under its shade the Queen met her lover. It would be hard to devise a more romantic setting for the drama, which culminated in the tragic last act played out in the Hall of the Abencerrages.

Terrace upon terrace ascend the mountain until the mirador is reached, a white tower crowning the highest point of the Generalife. Beyond this lofty lookout, olive trees climb the grass grown crest to the massive red ruins known as the Silla del Moro, or Seat of the Moor. From here Boabdil

watched the fluttering pennants, gleaming spears and heavy guns of the Christian host move across the plain to carry death and destruction into his city.

The last few days of my stay in Granada were spent down in the quaint old town at the foot of the two hills. It was so hot that the gleaming snow of the Sierra Nevadas seemed an optical illusion. From the window of my hotel I could almost touch the yellow-brown wall of the great Cathedral, whence a goggle-eyed gargoyle thrust out a prying head to watch my every movement. No less than six clocks chimed the hours and quarters in rapid succession to be followed, after an interval of five minutes, by a seventh. In the dark Cathedral, however, it was generally silent and always cool. That much described building is not only the best Renaissance example of its kind in Spain, but is also one of the finest churches in Europe. It is dedicated to Santa Maria de la Encarnacion. The principal entrance is at the south-west end and is decorated with elaborate reliefs depicting the Incarnation, the Annunciation and the Assumption. The enclosed choir occupies the site of the imposing minaret of the Moorish mosque demolished in 1588, and contains the tomb of Alonso Cano, the great artist who devoted so many years of his life to embellishing the Cathedral with its richest paintings and most realistic carvings. He came to Granada under a cloud, having fled from Valladolid, where he was accused of having murdered his wife. Near by sleeps Mariana Pineda, the local heroine, condemned to death by Fernando VII and his minister, Calamarde. The lady was young, beautiful and the widow of a Brigadier General. She was suspected of revolutionary tendencies and arrested. An incriminatory flag was found upon her, and she was shot in the Patio del Trionfo, on May 26th, 1831. A shabby pillar and rusty iron cross mark the spot where she fell, a victim to the cause of liberty.

In spite of its rich gilding and the elaboration of its sculptured details the first impression made by the Cathedral is one of bareness. This never quite wears off. The only seats are the choir stalls. The vast floor of black and white marble, in a chessboard design, appears disconcertingly void. Pulpits, organs and side chapels seem so many glowing jewels in a half empty casket.

The most interesting portion is the Capilla Real built, in 1506-17, as a mausoleum for the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, and added to by Charles V, who

transferred to it the bodies of his parents, Queen Juana and Philip of Austria.

The style is late Gothic. Glittering gilt rosettes star the radiating arches of the high vaulted ceiling. The floor is of white marble, and the walls are profusely adorned with crowns and armorial bearings. To left and right of the altar are prayer desks before which kneel wooden effigies of Ferdinand and Isabella. A series of wooden bas reliefs, splendidly coloured and gilt, illustrates the last acts of the conquest of Granada. The Queen is depicted riding into the city between the King and Cardinal Mendoza, followed by a picturesque array of armed warriors. Before her stands Boabdil beside his famous white charger. The vanquished monarch is in the act of tendering the great iron key of the Alhambra. A second panel illustrates the forced conversion of Muhammadans by Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros. As many as three thousand were baptised at a time by use of the pergilum, or sprinkler, in defiance of the terms of capitulation, which guaranteed religious liberty to the conquered.

Directly in front of the altar rise the magnificent white marble tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella topped by their effigies. The King wears the order of St. George, and the Queen that of Sant Iago. To their left are the monuments of their daughter, Queen Juana, heiress of the united crowns of Castile and Aragon, and of her husband, Philip the Handsome of Austria. The tombs are railed round by an extremely beautiful metal screen. A narrow flight of steps descends to the vault below. The interior is visible through the iron bars of the door. In the centre rest the stone coffins of the Catholic sovereigns. To right Queen Juana lies with the tiny coffin of Prince Michael at her feet. To left is the coffin of Duke Philip, which the widowed Queen kept beside her during her long forty-six years madness spent, closely confined, in the castle at Tordesillas.

In the adjoining sacristy visitors are shown interesting mementoes of the Catholic sovereigns. Among them are the sceptre and crown of Isabella, Ferdinand's sword and the scarlet and gold standards borne by the cavalry and infantry on the state entry into Granada. A richly chased silver casket contains the original charter to Christopher Columbus signed, in the royal camp at Santa Fe, on April 17th, 1491. Here, too, is the great key of the Alhambra delivered up by Boabdil. It is of iron, not silver, as is usually recorded, and is twelve inches long. A portrait of Queen Isabella depicts

her with oblique eyes, high cheek bones, a pointed chin and straight black hair parted in the middle and looped over the ears. Ferdinand is represented as dark, with a long aquiline nose, thick lips and a heavy jaw characterised by a pronounced cleft in the chin. The countenance is a forbidding one, and the expression lugubrious and sinister.

The narrow Placeta de la Lonja divides this portion of the Cathedral from the palace of the Catholic sovereigns, a long two storeyed edifice originally the celebrated University of Granada, an advanced seat of light and learning under the Moors. Nothing could exceed the florid elaboration of the façade with its faded frescoes and immense coats of arms, its grated windows, projecting balconies and upper casements wreathed with heavy stucco fruit and flowers, and surmounted by crowns and the letters F and Y for, in Spanish, Isabel is so spelt. Known as the *Caso del Cabildo Antigua* it long served as a Town Hall. Now it has degenerated into a warehouse for piece goods, so that few visitors witness the marvel of its domed ceiling lined with stone wrought, by skilful carvers, into the semblance of flowers, foliage, and the emblems of royalty. Upstairs again is a magnificent wooden ceiling, which surpasses that of the far famed *Sala de la Barca* in the Alhambra.

On the opposite side of the way stands the Lonja, or Exchange, a gorgeously carved stone edifice upon which the sculptor has showered his favours with a prodigal hand. The wrought iron work screens, of the upper windows, are particularly fine.

Near the south-west corner of the Cathedral metal gates admit to the *Algaiccria*, once the Moorish bazaar. The narrow passages and little crowded houses remain as they were in Boabdil's day. Each casement is framed by a graceful horseshoe arch decorated with involved fret work and moulding in the most delicate and lace-like of designs. Support is lent by slender pillars with ornate capitals.

Out into the open square of *Viva Rambla*, the Arab tilting ground, and thence to the *Calle de Maria Pineda*, which none should miss on account of the Moorish granary. There is no confounding it with its Christian neighbours, closely though they crowd about it. At the very first glance the fretted splendour of its great horseshoe portal proclaims its infidel origin. Within is a dark passage remarkable for a ceiling of the richly gilt and coloured honeycomb type associated with the Alhambra. Beyond lies a great paved

court with a tank in the centre. On all sides stretch the four faces of an immense mansion, its balconies ablaze with geraniums and carnations. Here and there, among the flowers, a few shirts hang out to dry. Fowls roost on the tiled roof. Heavily laden donkeys wait patiently in the quadrangle, for the old granary is now partitioned into tenement dwellings for the very poor.

A few paces up the street bring the inquisitive stranger to the stately yellow palace, known to fame as the birthplace of Don Angel Fernandez, Duke of Abrantes. Humble houses elbow its aristocratic sides. From an upper balcony of one of the shabbiest, protruding bamboo poles presume to rest upon the ducal roof. From them depend stockings, vests and other articles of too intimate a nature to be named with impunity. Verily Spaniards are a democratic people.

Just outside the city, on the left bank of the Xenil, lingers the little pink and white church of San Sebastian, in reality a converted mosque. A tablet, on its southern wall, tells how, on this spot, Boabdil yielded up the key of the Alhambra to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The inscription is headed by the crown and arms of Castile. The stranger turns away with the firm conviction that, no matter which king, or queen may nominally occupy the throne of Spain, the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella will continue as long as time itself in Granada.

CHAPTER IX

ALBAICIN AND RONDA

"IT'S rather a stiff climb, but will you come over to my studio this afternoon? I am up on the Albaicin. You have only to ask for the English artist. Everyone knows my house."

The invitation was given in the Lion Court of the Alhambra by Mr. Wynne-Apperley, the young painter, whose clever studies of gypsies have won a reputation. Accordingly 3.30 p.m. found me ascending a steep cobble paved alley of the Falconers' Quarter, the oldest portion of the Moorish capital. An occasional whiff of unsavoury odour mingled with the fragrance of carnations and geraniums clustering, in pink and scarlet profusion, on every small projecting balcony overhead. The hot June sunshine cast a drowsy spell upon brown roofs, whitewashed houses, small grated windows and flower decked casements, investing the scene with dream-like glamour, and that bewildering suggestion of unreality produced by a dazzling light.

Mediaeval writers wax eloquent over the beauties of Albaicin, rival hill to the Alhambra. The two are separated by the swiftly flowing Darro. Time, however, has dealt less kindly with it. The once aristocratic quarter is now just the reverse. Its chief interest, for strangers, lies in the gypsy cave-dwellings, which burrow, like so many rabbit warrens, amid the cactus and aloes bristling upon its sunburnt face. Gone is the Alcazaba, the formidable red citadel which commanded its green height. Of its battlements naught but a fragment remains. Its palaces, and the mansions of its nobles have crumbled to dust. Oranges, lemons and scarlet blossomed pomegranates no longer ripen about the fountains of its arcaded patios. Silenced are the voices of the Muezzins, who summoned the Faithful to prayer in the many mosques with the oft-repeated cry:—"There is no God but God. Muhammad is the Prophet of God." Few even remember that here Boabdil established his court in opposition to that

of his uncle, El Zagal, the Valiant, who reigned in the Alhambra. Thus each hill had its king and its government. The struggle between them for supremacy filled the intervening squares, and narrow streets with dead and wounded, and gave the Christians the chance of conquest, for which they had waited so long.

Out in the open square of San Nicola I was surrounded by children all clamouring for centimos. Selecting one as guide, an intelligent dark eyed boy of twelve, I bade him lead me to the house of the English artist. Before proceeding to do so he drove off the remainder of the noisy pack.

There is a family resemblance about all studios. That of Mr. Wynne-Apperley, a long, narrow, upper floor room, had something of the atmosphere of Chelsea about it, something of the culture, and almost fastidious refinement. But there was nothing of Chelsea about the view framed by the window. In the foreground rose the green hill and tremendous red battlements of the Alhambra. Below lay the brown roofs of Granada, and the big irregular pile of the Cathedral, with its low dome and squat octagonal tower. Behind the vermilion fortress of the Moors, the great snowy rampart of the Sierra Nevadas glistened, white and dazzling, against the clear blue of a turquoise sky. It was such a picture as must be at once the delight and despair of an artist.

Mr. Wynne-Apperley showed me sketches of the Alhambra, remarkable for the delicate accuracy of the details, the vivid colouring and, greatest charm of all, the atmosphere. He had caught the subtle spirit of the old Arabian palace. His canvas reflected it with mirror-like fidelity. Then he passed to a portfolio of gypsy types. It was to study this strange race that he had made his home at Albaicin. The house was his own. He had purchased it for two hundred pounds. His electric light cost him a shilling a month, and his work was done by a family to whom he assigned quarters rent free. Rates and taxes were not known. It was a tale to make the envious gasp. Who, listening to it, would not be an artist, or a fakir?

Thereafter he took me to the gypsy quarter. First, however, we slaked our thirst at a local fonda in company with two or three khaki clad soldiers, their round caps banded with blue and red. In lieu of casks a number of goatskins were filled with wine as they were in Cervantes' day. All the time strident voiced children swarmed around vociferously demanding money. Apparently the entire juvenile popula-

tion of Albaicin turn out to beg at the approach of a forerunner. Small wonder that strangers are warned against venturing into the old quarter alone.

Led by the artist and accompanied by a policeman, plus an ever augmenting escort of beggars, I climbed higher up the hill, then round, and in and out by precipitous paths strewn with irregular stones, to the celebrated gypsy colony.

In common with all his mysterious race the Spanish gypsy is an incurable vagabond. Throughout the centuries he has defied the laws of his adopted land which, at one time, held vagrancy a capital offence punishable by burning at the stake. Gradually, however, the spread of civilisation has accomplished what legislation could not. It has curtailed his liberty of movement. He is no longer an unchallenged wanderer in vast waste spaces, but is constrained to look about for a settled abode for his wife and children, if not for himself.

By far the largest gypsy settlement is at Albaicin, where the Gitanos, to give them their Spanish name, are reputed to have taken up their abode towards the middle of the sixteenth century. The spot, of their selection, is in keeping with their untamed and savage mode of existence. Like themselves it is wild in the extreme, being steep, rocky, overgrown with prickly cactus and difficult of access. Here they dwell in the caves with which the face of the cliff is honeycombed. Occasionally the women wander across to the Alhambra to ply their immemorial trade of fortune telling under cover of selling baskets. The men follow a variety of nefarious callings in addition to their avowed profession of farriers and horse dealers. All, however, are loafers and beggars, who have never done a day's work in their lives.

The first cave we came to was obviously a showplace got up for the benefit of tourists. The interior was very fine. Brass bowls and glittering cooking utensils shone on the whitewashed walls of the outer compartment. The inner was completely blocked by a large wooden bed decked with a scarlet counterpane, and lace trimmed sheets and pillows. The owner was a middle aged gypsy woman, bold eyed and crafty looking. Real cherries were threaded through her ears and she wore a black fringed shawl over a blue and white cotton dress. Instantly she desired to tell my fortune. Failing this she essayed to sell me a brass vessel, off the wall, at an exorbitant figure. The Gitanos of Spain are no novices

in the gentle art of profiteering. They learnt it without the costly teaching of a German war. A younger woman brought forward an infant, and held out its tiny wrinkled hand for money.

A group of gaudily attired girls had collected outside the mouth of the cave. They were artists' models. Their finery included gaily coloured and embroidered shawls, long earrings, high combs in a variety of bright hues and carnations fastened into their coarse black hair. They were eager to dance for my benefit ; and were willing to do so for the modest fee of fifty pesetas. Their performance had already been described to me by an indignant American, who had denounced it as an audacious swindle, in addition to being particularly dull and depressing. He, by the way, had been mulcted a hundred pesetas plus a couple of bottles of wine. In Hare's day they asked five pesetas, which that author considered outrageous in view of the fact that their gypsy sisters, of Seville, considered themselves sufficiently rewarded with twenty centimos.

Instead, I took their photograph, whereat they clamoured for payment and were thoroughly dissatisfied with three pesetas. All the while the children kept up their noisy demands for money. Their shrill chorus almost drowned the harsher voices of their elders.

Shaking them off with difficulty we plunged deep into the cactus. Steep hidden paths led to real gypsy cave dwellings. To these, however, the tourist rarely, if ever, penetrates. Unkempt looking women, with large staring eyes, high cheek bones and hard mouths, stood, or sat near the whitewashed entrances. Ragged, half naked children played about in the dust. Some had skins dark as mahogany. Others were comparatively fair. I even saw a few with curly yellow hair. The younger women carried babies. At our approach they, and their ragged offspring raised a howl, and held out their hands for money, undeterred by the presence of the khaki clad policeman.

Their habitations consist of an inner and an outer cave. The furniture comprises a stool or two and one bed. Presumably most of the family sleep on the floor. When the stout wooden door is barred at night there is no ventilation of any kind. In compensation for the total lack of air there is ample light. The interior of every cavern is brilliantly illuminated by electricity.

Two smoke begrimed hollows in the rock were pointed out



VI I IS IIVIN

to me with considerable pride. Each contained a rusty forge. No blacksmith was in sight. From first to last we only saw one man in the gypsy quarter and he appeared to be an octogenarian. Until recently the Gitanos of Albaicin possessed a King. Upon his death they refrained from electing a successor so that the crown, in typical gypsy fashion, may be described as going a-begging.

As I made my way down hill by a path that it would be flattering to term a goat track, I came face to face with a party of Spanish women completely dressed in black and veiled in mantillas. It was Friday consequently there were following the Via Crucis, which winds past fourteen crosses, up the Sacro Monte, so called on account of the white Church of San Miguel, a famous place of pilgrimage, perched high on the summit.

The train for Ronda left at 8.10 a.m. A crowded hotel omnibus took me to the station where I was pleasantly surprised to find the ticket office open. Better still there were two; one for holders of kilometric tickets, and the other for ordinary travellers. There was no wearisome wait lined up in a queue, as at other places. The remainder of Spain would do well to emulate the good example set by Granada in this respect.

Atafera was the first stop, a little town in the vega surrounded by fields of wheat, beetroot, and potatoes. Its many distilleries bore the names of popular saints, such as San Antonio, Santa Adelaida, etc., piously displayed in big letters on roof and walls. Historically the neighbourhood is famous for the defeat inflicted upon Muhammad VIII, of Granada, by the Castilians, in 1431, and known as the Battle of Higuera, from the small fig tree, under shadow of which the tent of King John II was pitched. Here passengers alight for Santa Fe, three miles distant.

In turn the sulphur springs of Sierra Elvira and the Puente de Pinos were passed. I caught a glimpse of the long stone bridge, which Christopher Columbus was crossing when overtaken by the Queen's messenger, and recalled to the royal camp at Santa Fe. To left of the line lay Soto de Roma, the estate chosen by the Duke of Wellington out of three submitted for his selection by Fernando VII.

Rocky tan colored ridges rise to left and right of Loja, a scattered white town dominated by a brown church. Old battlements and towers occupy the centre. Within lies an empty green ring, the site of the Moorish castle regarded as

one of the keys of Granada, hence the desperate resistance offered to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1488. Boabdil conducted the defence in person. Signal service was rendered to the Christian cause by the Earl of Rivers and his company of yeomen and archers, who dashed forward to the fray shouting their battle cry "St. George for England." They were the first to enter the suburbs of the city. Although wounded Lord Rivers pressed forward until incapacitated by a stone hurled down from the battlements. This knocked out two of his teeth and rendered him senseless. No sooner had he recovered consciousness than he refused to be carried to the rear. Instead he pitched his camp, and raised his standard in the quarter that he had captured. Here he was visited by King Ferdinand.

A motor bus runs out to the renowned fortress of Alhama situated in a rocky fastness, and long considered impregnable. Its dramatic capture, by the Marquis of Cadiz, in the fifteenth century, has been sung by bards throughout succeeding ages, who have gloated over the rage and despair of the Moors at its loss. Lord Byron translated one of the best known of these ballads in his poem commencing with the verse :

" The Moorish King rides up and down
Through Granada's royal town ;
From Elvira's gates to those
Of Vivarambla, on he goes.
Woe is me Alhama ! "

Hardly had the train moved out of Loja than it stopped again at San Francisco. Women stood on the platform selling baskets of plaited grass filled with cherries. Others tendered round sponge cakes coated with white icing, a speciality of the place. The better to attract custom they kept up a deafening clamour, in which they were joined by an army of blind beggars, each of whom was accompanied by his, or her attendant page, a ragged urchin remarkable for his vocal powers and dauntless persistency.

Much of the scenery passed was wild and grand. A green river flowed along the foot of a stony grey ridge between banks aglow with the vivid pink blossoms of rosebays. Here towered the Pena de los Enamorados, or Rock of the Lovers, whence a Spanish knight and eloping Moorish maiden flung themselves, when overtaken by their pursuers. The romantic legend is told by Southey in his " Laila and Manuel."

Boabdilla was reached at midday, a large and busy junction

where there was a wait for lunch. It was extremely hot and the flies were troublesome. Thereafter the train traversed undulating moorland empty, but for an occasional olive grove, or herd of brown goats. These were succeeded by wheat fields of a curious and puzzling yellow. The phenomenon turned out to be due to a tall, and remarkably prolific weed, the bright lemon hued flowers of which topped the grain by several inches. Now and then a large brown and white hawk rose heavily from the ground, and sailed majestically away into the blue distance beyond the grey hills. A fellow traveller pointed out a little high perched mountain village, and great ruined castle, as the property whence the Empress Eugenie derived her title of Countess of Teba.

The train continued to climb upwards until Ronda was reached at 3.15 p.m., a romantic old Moorish city of white houses, and sloping brown tiled roofs built on a rocky eminence commanding a bird's eye view of deeply sunken plain, and distant amphitheatre of tan coloured mountains. A precipitous chasm divides the original Arab quarter from the later Spanish town. The two are united by a long stone bridge known as the Puente Nuevo. On the southern side stretches the broken girdle of Ronda's triple line of fortifications. The ruined ramparts are gay with wild flowers—pink and amethyst snapdragon, deep blue forget-me-nots, tall purple thistles and feathery grasses. In some places houses have burrowed into the massive walls, the foundations of which date from Iberian days, and were already old when the Romans built upon them. Whitewashed cottages peep out from under round towers crowned with battlemented parapets, or rise, phoenix-like, from the ruins.

The principal house, the Casa del Rey Moro, perches at a dizzy altitude on the overhanging brow of the yawning chasm tunnelled by the Guadalevin. Its spick and span exterior suggests a brand new imitation rather than the genuine old palace of the Rulers of Ronda. Yet such it is. Those who would take exception to it, on account of its immaculate state of preservation, may draw comfort from the thought that so it must have appeared in the eyes of its original owners. Æsthetic persons, who utter piercing cries of indignant protest at sight of a restored edifice, would do well to recollect that the brilliant colours, and general air of cared-for prosperity, which so offend them, are far more true to life than those picturesque ruins, which arouse their passionate admiration. No architect ever set out to deliberately plan a tumble-

down mansion, and no gardener ever yet laid out a wilderness. Such effects can only be achieved by those incomparable old Masters, Time and Nature. It is very doubtful whether, if confronted with the grandest and most beautiful ruin in the world, its original owner would thrill with joy at sight of crumbling turrets, creeper hung walls, flower carpeted floors and the blue vault of Heaven itself for roof. The probabilities are that he would be painfully affected in an adverse sense. This being the case there can be no question but that Hamet el Zegri, the last Moorish ruler of Ronda, would be very grateful to the Duke and Duchess of Parecent for keeping his palace in a good state of repair.

The face, which the Casa del Rey Moro shows to the steep cobble paved street, is of light brown stone inset with a shrine to Our Lady framed in beautifully carved ebony, and a representation, in coloured tiles, of Boabdil, the last King of Granada. The corners of the façade are emphasised by square towers of red brick. Between them stretches a characteristic azulejos roof of glistening peacock blue tiles. Little barred windows peep from under the eaves. An iron balcony, adorned with coronets and coats of arms, projects above the small door, which constitutes the unpretentious main entrance.

Inside is a square arcaded patio roofed with glass, and looked down upon by two tiers of windows. Here I was received by a kindly housekeeper, who proceeded to show me over the palace. She pointed out the many art treasures, named their period and history, and touched upon their particular features with the enthusiasm of a connoisseur. The ceilings had retained their glowing wealth of Moorish decoration. There was one of dark wood, in the form of the hull of a ship, patterned with gleaming gold. Yet another was inset with tiles painted with fruit and flowers in brilliant tones. The many little rooms were filled with quaint and delightful old furniture, notably carved four poster beds with saints enshrined in niches above the pillow. Thus piously protected even "the head that wears a crown" should be able to lie at ease. I was invited to step out on to the balcony which hung sheer over the deep chasm, at the bottom of which the river flowed hundreds of feet below. The rocky sides of the precipitous gorge were green with cactus. It was an awe-inspiring drop.

In conclusion I was led through terraced gardens, where the hot air was perfume laden with the fragrance of roses

and jasmine, and of lesser flowers imprisoned within stiff borders of myrtle. The splash of fountains echoed musically from gleaming marble basins, across which graceful palms, and stately cypress cast lengthening shadows as the day advanced. The housekeeper pointed to the awful depths yawning below. Two old bridges, one above the other, spanned the chasm. The upper, a horse shoe arch, proclaimed its Moorish origin. The lower, shaped like a U reversed, was equally typical of ancient Rome. There they hung, dim and remote as the ages which gave them birth, their masonry solid and enduring as the influences of the two distinct empires, one of the West, the other of the East, whereof Spain and, in a lesser degree, the whole modern world are the product.

On returning to the hotel I was startled to see an Arab lolling in front of the entrance. His appearance was brilliant and exotic thanks to a bright blue robe, vivid lemon coloured burnous, bare feet thrust into heelless yellow slippers, and a red fez, whence dangled an enormous black tassel. After the first start of surprise I concluded that this fantastical individual was a pedlar. Great, therefore, was my astonishment, on entering the dining room that night, to see him seated, if his sprawling attitude may be so described, at table in front of a small boy, to whom he was, evidently, attached as nurse. His youthful charge seemed in imminent danger of suffocation from swallowing his soup spoon, a catastrophe which appeared inevitable at each fresh mouthful. Fortunately a diversion was created by the arrival of the remainder of the family, a fat mother, a corpulent father and two more stout sons. As they all repeated the spoon trick I felt somewhat reassured. Seemingly it ran in the family, like a wooden leg.

There is no difficulty in distinguishing the parvenu wherever encountered. The newly rich is so obviously new, whereas it takes a generation or two to make a snob.

Early on the following morning I started out to photograph the Roman bridge. The town was already astir. Activity reigned in the market, a large white building of pillared arcades at the southern end of the Puente Nuovo. There were a few improvised stalls, otherwise most of the various food stuffs were spread upon the ground. Outside, in the burning sunshine near the entrance, a man was busily engaged in cooking great yellow rings of greasy looking pastry. Old women sat on the cobble stones of the pavement beside confused masses of unhappy fowls, with tightly pinioned legs, and big white eggs in round baskets of rope. Local colour

was lent by the gay scarlet and blue trappings of the many heavily laden donkeys and mules, their bulging string panniers strained to their utmost holding capacity. In a long low shop near by, lighted only by its open door, half a dozen men sat stitching away at these same harnesses, the manufacture of which constitutes an important industry.

The road ran past the Casa del Rey Moro on the left. A little lower down, on the right, stood the yellow palace of the Marquess de Salvatierra, its black nail studded door flanked by naked figures below an iron balcony surmounted by coronets, and coats of arms cut in stone, and brilliantly coloured and gilt. Within lay the usual patio surrounded by pillared arcades, under the discreet gaze of small grated windows. Immediately below rose the old Roman gate of a single arch. Beyond again the Moorish bridge swung across the Tajo, or chasm, between deep stone parapets. At the further end stretched a brief row of whitewashed houses. The third, on the left, was pierced by a passage, which constituted a public right of way. At the back, steep steps wound down the beetling cliffside, where an occasional clump of cactus, or some wild flowers managed to find a precarious footing. From below issued the roar of the jade green river. There was something awful in the gloomy darkness of the abyss, where the black mouths of caverns opened in monstrous yawns.

At last the steps came to an end. A few rotting planks stretched across to a spiral iron staircase. This led down to the ancient Roman bridge. Near by a small white mill stood on the bank of the Guadalevin. On either side towered overhanging cliffs of gloomy grandeur topped by the palace of the Moorish king, whence a subterranean passage of three hundred and sixty-five steps leads down to the river. It was upon this secret stair that the garrison depended for their water supply, when besieged. The task of water carrier devolved upon the hundreds of wretched Christian captives awaiting ransom, or exchange in the many dungeons. The clank of their chains echoed ceaselessly through the dark passages, as, night and day, they toiled up with their heavy load of precious life sustaining liquid.

The fall of Ronda occurred on May 20th, 1485. Its ruler, Hamet el Zegri, had been absent on one of his customary raids into Andalusia. Dozy's remark that the Spanish knight, of the Middle Ages, fought neither for patriotism, nor religion, but in order to get something to eat was almost

equally true of his Moorish contemporary. Hamet returned to his rock perched city driving before him fat herds of cattle and followed by mules laden with plunder. Hot was his wrath at finding his stronghold surrounded by the tents of the invading Castilian army. In vain he sought to pierce the enemy's lines and fight his way through. Nevertheless the garrison held out until the Marquis of Cadiz cut their water supply. At this they surrendered. Great was the joy of the Christian captives at their deliverance. Their fetters were struck off and sent, as thankofferings, to the Church of San Juan de los Reyes at Toledo, where they may still be seen hanging on the outer wall at either side of the main entrance.

The best view of Ronda is obtained from the Alameda, a pleasant tree planted square, the popular evening promenade. Its southern limit is a broad walk protected by a stone parapet. Below is a sheer drop of several hundred feet to the river. In one place the precipice presents the appearance of a yellow wall smoothed by giant hands. In another it is rough and irregular, and bristles with immense projecting boulders, which seem on the verge of crashing to destruction. To left lies the ancient city, its Spanish and Arab quarters united by the Puente Nuovo. Far beneath is the valley, a hollow green basin patterned with the yellow of corn fields. In the west the setting sun still streaks the darkening sapphire of the sky with fiery red. From the east comes the pale radiance of the rising moon. As yet no stars are seen in the blue vault above but, below, amber lights gleam fitfully from a few scattered white houses by the water's edge.

CHAPTER X

ALGECIRAS AND CADIZ

FORTUNE favours the brave. At times, too, the same uncertain deity smiles upon the reckless, a fact to which I attribute my safe arrival at the station on the afternoon of my departure from Ronda. The very youthful driver of the hotel omnibus seemed possessed of a passion for speed. Regardless of the perils of the road he urged his mules over cobble stones, and round sharp corners at a pace that seemed to render catastrophe inevitable.

It was 2 30 p.m. The heat on the crowded platform was of furnace-like intensity. Country women fanned themselves. Men mopped their heads. One particularly well nourished individual appeared on the verge of an apoplectic seizure. Such conveniences as electric fans do not commend themselves to Spanish railway companies. The relief was general when the train arrived. Before entering the compartment, in which I had reserved a seat, I was obliged to wait, while some dozen people assisted a paralysed old gentleman to make the steep and difficult descent necessitated by the height of Spanish carriages. When he had been lowered to safety, a procession of female relatives trooped down after him. All wore unrelieved black, in strange contrast to which each lady carried an enormous round bouquet of pink and red carnations. The death-like immobility of the invalid, the mourning garb of the women, and the gaudy flowers produced an effect so fantastical as to be almost grotesque.

Shortly after leaving Ronda the line passes close under the Cueva del Gatto, the famous Cat's Cave renowned for its stalactites. The fleeting glimpse of towering grey rock, gloomy cavern and blue-green pool, jewel bright in the sunshine, is most romantic and beautiful. The scenery hereabouts is wild, majestic and strange, a heritage from that past—geologically speaking not so far distant—when tremendous earthquake shocks rent Europe and Africa asunder,

and the waters of the Mediterranean rendered the divorce permanent.

Immense cliffs, rugged, grey and precipitous, rise suddenly from the luxuriant green of the vega, like headlands from out the sea. Dotted among them are rounded red hills climbed over by trees, and a profusion of stunted palms. At times a yellow patch of ripening wheat appears at the very top. The winding river gleams, now brown, then green, as it furrows a boulder strewn course between banks densely fringed with the vivid pink of oleanders.

The train runs through a series of black tunnels, and red and yellow gorges to a white town clinging to the mountain side below the brown ramparts and towers of a very large Moorish castle. From there onwards hill and narrow valley were clothed with the sombre green of cork trees. Those newly stripped of their bark, a process repeated every seven years, looked pinky red and naked amid their comrades, to whose half healed scars kindly Nature had applied a verdant bandage of ivy. At every little station the platform literally disappeared under piles of cork. Finally the train emerged from the shadow of the many trees to pasture land, where long horned cows were grazing, knee-deep, in wild flowers.

Suddenly there was an exclamation from the two Spaniards seated near the window. "Gibraltar!" At the magic word all sprang up and crowded to look out. The great rock rose from the placid sea like some petrified monster of the deep, its tail towards Africa and its head turned to gaze upon Spain. No fortifications were visible, nor any sign of human habitation. For all evidence of life it might have been a tenantless rock.

Emotion is contagious. For a moment I was uncomfortably conscious of a quickening of the pulses, and a contraction of the throat. Gibraltar had never appealed to me thus powerfully when viewed from the sea. No foreigner can appreciate its significance for Spaniards, in whose eyes it must almost appear a *Sacro Monte*. Even antiquity held it in awe as one of the two Pillars of Hercules which, with *Ablyā*, across the Straits, guarded the portals of the known world. Beyond that limit mariners might not penetrate. While the Carthaginians remained masters of the Western Mediterranean they drowned all who rashly essayed to transgress against this accepted principle of navigation.

Known to the Romans as *Mons Calpe*, the famous rock first assumed military importance in 711, the year of the

Arab conquest. Fortifications were begun upon it by the invading general, after whom it was named *Jebel Tariq*, or Mount of Tariq, since corrupted into *Gibraltar*. In 1309 it was captured by Alonzo de Guzman, for the King of Castile. It lay too near the enemy's lines for the taste of the peaceably inclined. Accordingly Guzman was driven to seek settlers by offering an asylum to outlaws. A further inducement was immunity from import duties. The rock was wrested from the Spaniards by Muhammad IV of Granada, in 1333. Alfonso XI laid siege to it in 1349 but succumbed to plague (the Black Death) in front of its walls on March 20th, of the following year. So high was his reputation for courage and chivalry that Yusuf of Granada and his Court assumed mourning for him. It is even said that many Moors crossed, unarmed, to the Christian camp to attend his obsequies.

Gibraltar changed hands many times before yielding to a combined British and Dutch assault of three days' duration. Acting on his own initiative Admiral Sir George Rooke proceeded to hoist the English flag on July 24th, 1705, and take possession in the name of Queen Anne. The French and Spanish took advantage of the American War of Independence to invest the stronghold from 1779 until 1783. All their efforts were successfully repulsed by the Governor, Sir George Augustus Elliot, afterwards raised to the peerage as Lord Heathfield.

Algeciras boasts two railway stations, one in the town and the other at the port. I got out at the former and walked to an hotel recommended by a Spaniard, against whom I have ever since borne a grudge. Afterwards I strolled down to the harbour, its quay piled with cork awaiting export. Two or three small steamers lay at anchor. One had steam up. I was informed that she plied to and from Cadiz, there being no railway communication with that city. Everyone in Algeciras speaks a word or two of English, nevertheless it is a depressing place. The streets are narrow, dirty and crowded. Even the people look dingy and unpicturesque. My sympathy went out to those military officers, whose principal occupation seemed to consist in leaning upon a parapet gazing contemplatively towards Gibraltar.

Modern Algeciras is very different to the rich and splendid Moorish city against which the proud hosts of Christendom combined in 1342. Amid the brave array of standards that floated before its walls were those of Henry of Lancaster, and the Earl of Salisbury. Nor must mention be omitted of

Chaucer's "Gentle Knight," who was present at "ye seege of Algizir." The place held out for twenty months finally capitulating on March 26th, 1344. Subsequently it was retaken by the King of Granada who, practically, razed it to the ground.

The motor bus for Cadiz starts from the port at 6.45 a.m. Long before that hour intending passengers are required to assemble, as all baggage is subjected to rigorous examination by an Inspector of Customs, whose pale grey uniform, and white cotton gloves invest the proceedings with a formal dignity that might, otherwise, be lacking so early in the day. While waiting my turn I glanced across at Gibraltar. The great rock looked singularly grey and silent in the bright morning sunshine. The petrified monster was still asleep. For this I envied it. Personally I had been kept awake all night by the incessant din outside the hotel, for Spaniards are a nocturnal people. Just as the noise had begun to die down it was time for me to get up.

The bus was crowded. Immediately behind the driver was a narrow first class compartment screened by glass. It provided accommodation for four passengers. On this occasion an English commercial traveller was in undisputed possession. Behind was the second class with places for eleven. A tight fit. I took my seat beside a stout Spaniard, who had appropriated the left hand corner, and who slept practically the whole way. Opposite me was a Spanish woman from Brooklyn, U.S.A. accompanied by three small children, and a lanky youth of nineteen. All were en route to Cadiz, whence their ship was due to sail on the following day for New York. The woman was friendly and communicative. From a handbag she produced the baptismal certificates of the children who, by the way, were covered with skin disease. They were her youngest, she told me. She had left the seven elder ones behind in America with her husband, a chauffeur, while she came over to visit his relatives. She was glad to go back. In Spain she spent too much money. Yes, she was taking her sister's son with her. He was the eldest of fifteen, and would earn big money in New York as a waiter. All this I learnt before the bus started.

The dusty road wound quickly out of the town to thread its upward course amid mountains patched with dark forests of cork. Scarlet geraniums and oleanders bloomed by the wayside. There was plenty of traffic. Drives of very fine black cows in charge of men mounted on mules, long strings

of pack donkeys loaded with cork, and country women perched precariously on the same despised animals, on the top of string panniers bulging with vegetables. An occasional small whitewashed house was passed, its garden ablaze with geraniums and tall hollyhocks. Blue wild flowers rioted amid the yellow of wheat fields as the road ascended to a last view of Gibraltar, a grey rock in a pallid sea of polished silver.

A danger signal was the prelude to a series of corkscrew turnings, which twisted sharply downhill to Tarifa, a little white town on the seashore, still girdled by ancient walls and mediæval gates, whence a slender isthmus runs out to a flat promontory marked by a lighthouse. On these very ramparts Alonzo Guzman gave the momentous answer, which won for him undying fame as a Spanish hero. He had come forward to parley with the Moorish hosts lined up in battle array before the stronghold entrusted to his charge by Sancho IV. The King's renegade brother, Don Juan, was among the enemy. With him the worthless Prince had Guzman's eldest son, a lad of ten, whose life he swore should prove forfeit unless Tarifa were surrendered. Undaunted by the awful threat Don Guzman replied that, so far from yielding, he would provide his foe with a weapon to execute the barbarous deed. So saying he flung down his knife and walked from the battlements. A few minutes later, as he sat at dinner with his wife, a hoarse shout informed him that the sacrifice had been accomplished. Hurrying to the ramparts he was confronted by the bloody head of his little son. Horrified by Don Juan's act the Moors voluntarily raised the siege. All Spain rang with praise of Don Guzman, who was thenceforward known as El Bueno, the Good, a title engraved on his tombstone at Santiponce, near Seville.

For a little while the road ran level between very blue sea, on the left, and waving fields of yellow wheat backed by mountains, on the right. At the foot of a rocky spur, topped by a dilapidated square watch tower, it turned sharply and began to ascend into wild hilly country overgrown with cactus, stunted palms, rose bays and a few olive trees. A general move was made to draw the blinds. This accomplished my fellow passengers lapsed into peaceful slumber with an ease that bespoke constant practice. Meanwhile the bus pursued its course across a treeless plain. It was intensely warm. A hot wind blew from behind raising a dense cloud of white dust, which completely obscured the view ahead.

It was baffling as a fog. The driver could not see a yard in front of him.

There was a halt of half an hour for breakfast outside a small *fonda*. Here I became acquainted with the Englishman. He spoke no Spanish and so was at a loss to make it understood that he desired white, not red wine. He told me that he was a commercial traveller but was not sanguine as to business prospects, in support of which he related his experience at Algeciras, on the previous evening. Armed with a letter of introduction he had gone to call upon the head of a wealthy Spanish firm. The interview had lasted four hours. All the time a number of children kept on coming in and out, running about the room, eating mussels and throwing the shells on the floor. Strangers entered unceremoniously and interrupted the conversation, in addition to which there were a number of other diversions. In the end he had booked an insignificant order.

Before reaching San Fernando the road traversed a great sandy wilderness dotted with stubble and a little rank grass. Most of it, however, was divided up into small salt pans dominated by big pyramids of salt which, from a distance, looked like the white tents of an encampment. The approach to Cadiz is across another dreary salt marsh and a long curved isthmus. The forts still stand whence Field Marshal Soult essayed to bombard the city and harbour, during the wearisome siege, which commenced in 1810 and only ended with the French evacuation of Andalusia, late in 1812. Finally the bus passed, unchallenged, the fortified gates, traversed the long cobble paved streets, and came to a halt in the Place Loreto in front of the Custom House, at 1.30 p.m. Here luggage was again examined.

Frankly I was disappointed in Cadiz. This was not so much the fault of the place itself, as of those who had written about it in terms of extravagant praise. Truly a case of "Save me from my friends." I had read of it as a dazzling city of snow white houses, golden sunshine and azure sea; of fragrant flowers, beautiful women, romantic encounters and the soft music of guitars.

As I sat at lunch, in the Hotel de France, a deafening din arose outside. It bore no resemblance to the melodious tinkling of guitars, which I had been led to expect as a matter of course. In point of fact it proceeded from an orchestra of small boys, with blackened faces, each of whom beat a different kind of tin. Jam tins, petrol tins, biscuit tins, etc.,

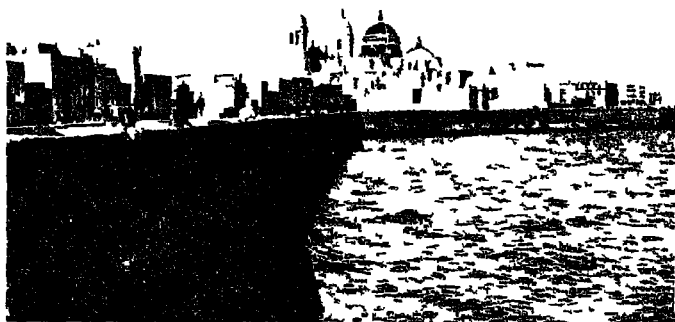
were all pressed into service as drums. Armed with these they, and similar wandering bands, paraded the town all day and far into the night, when bonfires blazed in honour of St. John's Eve, and cats held their proverbial witches' concert.

Meals at the hotel were enlivened by the blue and gold uniforms of naval officers. It was curious to see them in the streets carrying their swords after the manner of walking sticks. Ladies wore the high combs and graceful mantillas so eminently becoming to Spanish beauty. They were taller than their countrywomen encountered elsewhere. In addition, they were stout and decidedly comely, with a complexion the lustrous pallor of mother o' pearl. Their smile was dazzling as the sun of their native city and equally impartial.

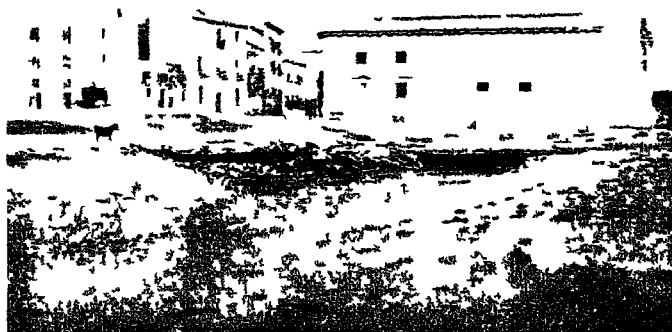
Poetical licence alone can justify the oft repeated description of Cadiz as a white city. The lofty houses, which are generally five storeys high, are tinted a variety of bright colours, a certain vivid shade of sea green being especially popular. The streets are narrow. Every now and again an arched doorway frames a romantic glimpse of arcaded patio green with palms and other plants.

On the afternoon of my arrival I strolled down to the sea front passing, in turn, three long pink buildings, namely the Artillery barracks, that of the Engineers, and the Captain General's palace. The last was guarded by a sentry, and some piles of old cannon balls. The sea wall consisted of an ugly parapet, about four feet in height, broken by frequent bombproof shelters filled with refuse, which emitted an overpowering stench. A shabby garden, calling itself the Alameda de Apodeca, was planted with a few dejected palms. These hung their limp and languorous leaves over shabby benches, the haunt of an army of particularly woebegone and persistent beggars. Away to the east the harbour could be seen stretching out a long arm into the Mediterranean. A few soldiers sauntered past. The infantry are all small men owing to the fact that the tall ones are picked for the artillery. Those next in size are drafted into the engineers, a system which makes for uniformity, and might well be adopted by our Army, where, at present, it is not an infrequent sight to see a Tommy towering head and shoulders above his marching companion.

The only lively place in Cadiz appeared to be the Plaza de Mina, a large square, once a convent garden, its centre filled with trees surrounded by a broad walk shaded by planes. Here little girls skipped and boys played leap frog, while their less energetic elders sat on benches. It would be difficult to



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SITE OF ONCE FAMOUS BULL ARENA CADIZ

imagine anything less energetic than the average Spaniard. Fortunately the country is rich in natural resources.

One side of the Plaza de Mina is dominated by the Academy. Enshrined in the entrance hall is a mighty figure of Hercules, the legendary founder of Cadiz. Of the two picture galleries the first is devoted to Old Masters and the second to new. Among the latter local interest chiefly concerns itself with a large painting of the fatal fall sustained by Murillo, while at work upon the Betrothal of St. Catherine above the high altar of the Capuchin Church near by. After seeing the picture I naturally bent my steps towards the historical scene of the disaster.

The Iglesia de Capuchinos overlooks the sea at the northern end of the Paseo del Sur. Entrance is by way of a long narrow courtyard. In the centre a large white marble statue of the Madonna rises from sculptured clouds and winged cherubims. The interior of the celebrated chapel is white-washed and singularly light. The high altar, with its superabundance of blue and white artificial flowers, occupies the site of the scaffolding, whence Murillo fell. Above is the painting upon which he was engaged at the time. The side shrines contain a number of pictures by famous masters. Prominent among them is Murillo's St. Francis, remarkable for the strong contrast between brilliant light and heavy shade. The Saint is depicted on his knees gazing rapturously at a yellow rift in the black clouds overhead, while behind him, from the depths of a sombre pool, a submerged figure thrusts forth a hand. Unfortunately the monk, entrusted with the work of restoring the masterpiece, saw fit to interpose the Infant Christ in the Heavenly opening.

The Paseo del Sur is a wide and shabby walk, that stretches along the sea front to south of the city. It is protected by a parapet, which constitutes the favourite resort of blue clad anglers, who may generally be seen sitting on it, in rows, their long lines dipping into the water far below. On the land side rise tall houses in a more or less dilapidated condition, their casements bright with the usual undergarments hung out to air in the sunshine. Above them rise the yellow dome and twin cupola-crowned towers of the Cathedral.

A wide circular depression in the ground marks the site of the Arena immortalised by Byron, in "Childe Harold," and graphically described by Gautier and other authors. It has been entirely swept away by the sea. Nothing remains of it but a scattered pile of blackened stones, amid which

chickens scratch and goats pick their way nibbling some scant blades of rank grass. Gautier says of it: "We went to see the Plaza de Toros which is small, and reckoned one of the most dangerous in Spain. It has no continuous tablas. There are kinds of wooden screens, at certain intervals, behind which the toreros take refuge when too closely pressed. It is the custom here to goad the bulls with sharply pointed darts rubbed with nitric acid, in order to render them furious: in short all possible means are employed to exasperate their natural disposition."

From the site of the Arena a brief walk leads to the Cathedral. A curious effect is produced by the lower portion being built of darker stone than the upper. The sharp contrast almost suggests a water line. The façade is comparatively plain, and looks across a long quadrangle planted with rows of palms. It is pierced by a high narrow arched door flanked by Corinthian columns. Immediately inside, the first chapel on the left contains the beautiful coloured wooden figure of St. Christopher, the child martyr, eulogised by Gautier as a masterpiece of the carver's art.

The fact that the Cathedral only dates from 1722 robs it of antiquarian interest, nevertheless it is well worth a visit if only for the sake of the extraordinary crypt, one of the most weird and ghostly places that I have ever entered. It lies under the high altar and is reached by a steep stairway. Overhead arches a vast circular ceiling composed of ring upon ring of fitted stone blocks. In the emptiness of the great circus every footfall echoes eighteen times, causing the massive walls, part of which are cut out of the solid rock, and resounding roof to tremble and sway as though from an earthquake shock.

Gloomy radiating galleries connect with a number of dim mortuary chapels, their walls lined with coffins, and their floors paved with marble tombstones. Truly it is an awesome place, the abode of death and the realm of eternal night. Every moment seems to threaten the glaring electric light with extinction. Every movement awakens clamorous echoes and shakes the dreadful vault to its foundations. Altogether it is not a place to appeal to the frivolously minded. There seems to be some dark morbid streak in the otherwise sunny Spanish character, which inspires a taste for horrors.

The Old Cathedral stands on rising ground at the back of the new. It is reached by a steep cobble paved street in which, as I passed, small boys, with blackened faces, were

joyously fanning the flames of a belated bonfire in honour of St. John. Only a portion remains of the splendid thirteenth century edifice founded by Alfonso X who, on September 12th, 1262, captured Cadiz from the Moors by a surprise attack. The greater part of the sanctuary was destroyed during the siege of 1596.

A toothless old sacristan seemed very pleased to see me. With pride he led me through the sombre splendour of the richly decorated interior divided into three aisles by plain white columns. The high altar is of carved wood, gorgeously coloured and lavishly gilt. Below it gushes the only spring of fresh water in Cadiz, hence the subsidiary title of the church, Santa Cruz Sobre Las Aguas. It occupies the site of an ancient pagan temple, in the mystical rites of which the now Christianised spring played an imposing rôle. On the wall an immense fresco depicts the gigantic form of the ever popular San Cristobal striding across the river with the Infant Christ on his shoulder.

A certain well known guide book informed me that Senor Don Gravina, the Admiral commanding the Spanish Fleet at Trafalgar on the fateful 21st October, 1805, lay buried in the Church of Nossa Senhora de la Carmen. Diligent search failed to reveal any traces of the tomb in question or, indeed, of any tomb. Several priests, from whom I sought information, professed themselves profoundly ignorant alike of Admiral Gravina and of Trafalgar. This was discouraging. Finally one came to the rescue. He was much younger than the others and had evidently forgotten less. The Admiral, he assured me, slept with other distinguished naval heroes in the Pantheon at San Fernando. Apparently it must be a great surprise to Spaniards when they come to London and see Trafalgar Square. Human nature is so constituted that the victor boasts a longer memory than the vanquished.

Some six miles of salt marsh separate Cadiz from San Fernando. The two are connected by an hourly service of electric trams. Unfortunately I just missed one so had a long wait in the hot sun in front of the palace of the Civil Governor, a great three storeyed edifice, tinted a brilliant pink, that dates from the stormy reign of Fernando VII. Close by is the harbour whence Christopher Columbus started upon his second voyage to the New World, on September 25th, 1493. This was a very different expedition to the first. The great discoverer sailed from Cadiz with a fleet of a hundred and seventy-one ships. Furthermore he was equipped with the

necessary materials for founding a colony—building requisites, agricultural implements, live stock and a number of artisans, labourers, cultivators and soldiers. Not until his third cruise, late in 1498, did he come upon the mainland of America.

San Fernando, a large and handsome town liberally provided with showy public buildings, is an important naval and military station. On reaching it I was told that the Pantheon lay outside in the suburbs, and was directed to take another tram, the conductor of which had never heard of any such place. Fortunately a young man, possessed of a smattering of French, came to the rescue. He got out at the Naval College and advised me to do likewise. Here he pointed to a long narrow building, of light brown stone, sandwiched between the Hospital of San Carlos, and the Escuela Naval Militar. The brown building, he assured me, was the Pantheon. He next approached a sentry, who replied that an order to view the tombs must be obtained from the Director of the Naval College. At this I approached the sailor on guard and sent in my card. After a brief delay I was shown into a room with green walls and a bright blue ceiling, surrounded by chairs with white covers. The open door looked on to a large square courtyard.

I had not waited long when the Assistant Director entered, an officer of frigate rank. He apologised for the Director, who sent his compliments and begged to be excused, as he was expecting an important military commission at ten o'clock. I glanced at my watch. It was just a quarter past that hour. I expressed the wish to visit the Pantheon. At this the Assistant Director appeared greatly surprised and somewhat mystified. Admission, he assured me, could only be obtained from the Captain General at San Fernando. The authorities of the Naval College had nothing to do with it, in fact he, himself, had never been inside the building. As to the Escuela Naval Militar it corresponded to Dartmouth. At that moment the cadets were absent on a cruise to Salónica. There were a hundred and thirty of them altogether and their ages ranged from fourteen to eighteen. He, himself, had seen service in the Spanish-American War and was with the fleet, when it got bottled up in the harbour of Sant Iago de Cuba.

I was thinking of taking my leave when some twenty khaki clad officers trooped into the room, evidently the Military Commission expected at 10 o'clock. It was now ten minutes

to eleven. Clearly a case of "better late than never." Conspicuous among them was one resplendent in a wide turquoise blue sash knotted on the right side, and weighted with heavy silver tassels. On the left breast he wore a large blue decoration. The Assistant Director rose hastily to receive them, and all hurried from the room at a speed that suggested a laudable desire to make up for lost time.

Contrary to general rule my last impression of Cadiz was the best. The train left for Seville at 6.45 a.m. Nature, always lavish of her favours on the Mediterranean coast, even sought to beautify the dreary salt marsh with big tufts of purple heather. Neat rows of salt pans stretched at either side of the line, and tall pepper coloured pyramids recalled the tragedy of Lot's wife. Undeterred by her fate I glanced back to where the great city lay on the edge of the Mediterranean. The yellow dome of the Cathedral glittered in the sunshine. The brown ramparts added a feudal touch. Distance, that great enchanter, made the scene appear wondrous fair, a magic realm of white palaces fashioned from shimmering mother o' pearl and set in a turquoise sea, the Cadiz of the poets, and of my dreams.

CHAPTER XI

SEVILLE

SEVILLE! The name is an "Open Sesame." Before it the doors of memory fly wide. A phantom host troops across the threshold, a strange motley throng. Roman emperors, Moorish potentates and Spanish kings tread on one another's heels. Infidel warriors, Christian knights, mariners and buccaneers, prelates, poets, painters, dramatists, martyrs, Saints, fair frail Court beauties and virtuous matrons all swell the long procession. Their pale faces and dim eyes haunt the stranger, and their wan lips bid him remember. He would gladly obey but the task is beyond him. There are so many of them, and they are all so celebrated. Eagerly he seeks some familiar visage. In the van he is quick to recognise Murillo and Cervantes, Christopher Columbus, O'Donnell and Cardinal Wiseman. Behind, in the thick of the press, is Alfonso X, the aged king to whom Seville remained loyal, although the rest of the realm had transferred allegiance to his son, Sancho, hence the city's motto—"No m'ha dejado" (She has not forsaken me). Surely that is Marshal Soult grasping the imperial eagle! The paper, in his other hand, is King Joseph's unwelcome order of recall to Toledo. There is Guzman El Bucno, and there San Fernando himself and there—but the vision fades as Seville comes into sight.

The first view is disappointing, the ground being too flat for scenic effect. The city lies in a wide plain across which the train wends its way amid groves of orange and olive, plantations of eucalyptus and pine, wheatfields and stretches of heath. Gradually the smoke of tall factory chimneys obscures the bright daylight. Through the haze Seville appears enveloped in a thin grey veil. Eagerly the eye seeks to penetrate the flimsy barrier in search of that Gothic wonder of the world, the great Cathedral. At last the looked for landmark emerges clearly, an irregular yellow pile dominated by the square Moorish tower and Christian belfry of the

Giralda, a name inspired by the revolving figure of Faith on its summit. Critics are apt to take exception to Bartholome Morel's interpretation of Faith as a weathercock represented by a woman grasping a banner and cross, and veering with every wind that blows. Possibly the conceit is less of a paradox than would at first appear. The tower was originally a Minar, whence the Muezzin summoned the Arab conquerors of Spain to prayer in the mosque below. Not until the sixteenth century did Ruiz erect a three storeyed Christian belfry thereon, inscribed around, in large letters, "*Turris fortissima nomen Dei.*"

On arrival the stranger is immediately beset by a vociferous crowd of hotel touts, each of whom seeks to pilot him to his own particular omnibus. Once seated inside he is bumped and jolted over the abominable cobble stones, which pave the streets of Spanish towns. It is extremely difficult to induce a Spanish hotel keeper, or his representative to name a fixed price for board and lodging. He hesitates, changes the subject and even walks away to avoid answering. It is necessary to insist, however; otherwise, on the day of reckoning, the charge will be found exorbitant. Moreover a sliding scale prevails. British and Americans are asked more than French. Spaniards, again, pay less.

Board consists of two meals a day, namely *almuerzo*, which is served from midday until 2.30 p.m., and *comida*, from 8.30 p.m. until ten o'clock, for Spaniards dine late. The dishes are numerous and the helpings liberal in the extreme. In country places red and white wine are included in the menu gratis. Comparatively few hotels can boast a bathroom. Hot water is, practically, an unknown luxury, and the same may be said of electric fans.

It is customary with writers to lay stress upon the Oriental appearance and character of Seville. Personally I am of opinion that those literary travellers so impressed can never have penetrated East of Suez. True, there are several seeming points of resemblance. The oxen are possessed of a decidedly Indian hump, the horizon is vast, the sky eternally blue, and there are palm trees, flies, mosquitoes and dust in abundance. Even in these apparent similarities, however, the difference between East and West is strongly emphasised.

My first visit was, unromantically enough, to the dentist. The hotel clerk recommended one whom, he solemnly assured me, was the best in Seville. A lift boy was told off to show the way. On arrival the door was opened by a smiling maid

dressed in black, with a white apron, and long jet earrings. She ushered me into a waiting room, where some ten or eleven people were already assembled. The dentist, she said, would arrive at 4 o'clock.

It was intensely hot. There were no periodicals on the central table as at dentists in other countries, nevertheless it was an imposing apartment. The walls were covered with large, and gorgeously coloured pictures peopled with historical personages, mainly kings, queens, and cardinals upon whom oceans of paint had been lavished. The resplendent gilt frames were in every respect worthy of the pictures. Prominence was given to an elaborate coat of arms surmounted by the bust of a knight, from whose helmet a forest of plumes sprouted in all directions. Seemingly the dentist was very proud of his coat of arms and the accompanying crest. They were repeated three times on every chair, and nine on each of the sofas. I wondered whether this were a precautionary measure to discourage patients from carrying away the furniture.

The heat grew rapidly more oppressive as the room filled. Veiled ladies flung back their mantillas and fanned themselves intermittently. Near the door a priest sat, with closed eyes, telling his beads. It was evident that he had almost reached the limit of human endurance. At 4.30 p.m. an unsuspected door opened suddenly in the wall beside me. Instantly two ladies rose and passed swiftly in. The magic portal closed behind them leaving all as it was before. Presently I discovered that no one was there by appointment. Each took his or her turn. A case of "first come first served."

My next visit was to the Cathedral, the largest Gothic edifice in the world. The houses, which crowd about it, preclude a just conception of its vast size, and the flatness of the site further detracts from the effect. Had the colossal pile been situated upon a height the coup d'oeil would have been stupendous. As it is it stands on a low stone terrace of five shallow steps. This forms a narrow footpath all around, edged by stone columns, their shape suggestive of cannons with the muzzle pointing upward. These peculiar pillars at once excite comment and curiosity. Formerly they were chained together. Now most of the connecting links have snapped. They are of considerable antiquity. Many were brought from the buried Roman city of Italica, on the opposite bank of the Guadalquivir. Others, again, were quarried from the Muhammadan mosque, which formerly

occupied the site of the Cathedral. The tremendous proportions of the Christian sanctuary are best expressed by the worthy members of the Chapter, who conceived the bold idea of building it. "Let us raise," said they, "a monument of such magnitude that posterity will imagine us mad to have undertaken it." They were as good as their word. Their Cathedral stands, to this day, an abiding testimony in stone to that faith by which mountains are moved.

Despite their proselytising zeal the good Canons spared some portions of the old masjid: a horseshoe arch here, a fragment of arabesque tracery there and even an entire quadrangle. Thus the Puerta del Perdon survives, a graceful gateway adorned with Moorish moulding, which weaves a lace-like design about a splendidly carved relief of Christ driving the money changers from the Temple. The usual crowd of beggars sit before its bronze doors near a little lamp lit, flower-decked shrine of the Madonna.

Within stretches the Patio de los Naranjos, the immense courtyard of the Moorish mosque. As its name implies it is planted with orange trees. Although late in June the green branches are weighted with golden fruit. The pavement is broken and grass grown. In the centre a fountain plays from the topmost of three graduated marble basins. On its southern side tapers the superb Puerta de los Naranjos, the finest and most richly ornamented Gothic portal which the Cathedral can boast. To east, shabby and inconspicuous, lurks an old stone pulpit, whence such inspired orators as San Vicente Ferrer and San Francisco Borjo thrilled the congregation assembled in the Orange Court. Behind stretches a wide arcaded cloister. At its shadowy southern end lingers an old Moorish horseshoe arch, whence dangles the bridle of Babieca, the battle charger of the Cid, whereof such marvellous tales are related. Near by hangs an elephant tusk and a crocodile. The latter gives its name to the neighbouring Puerta del Legarto, or Door of the Lizard, and was sent to Alonso el Sabio by the contemporary Moorish Sultan, together with a formal request for the hand of one of the daughters of the Spanish King.

The interior of the Cathedral is vast and awe inspiring. Row after row of immense columns stretch away, and are lost amid the shadows of the incense perfumed twilight. They soar overhead to the lofty roof. Each pillar, in itself, would constitute an imposing tower. The combined effect borders upon the supernatural. The side chapels are large as

churches. All are museums filled to repletion with rare and beautiful art treasures. In the centre stands the great Gothic choir, a cathedral within a cathedral. Here, however, it appears insignificant, a mere trifle amid the wide aisles and petrified forest of Titanic columns. Everything is on so colossal a scale that it is some time before the mind is capable of grasping details. The spirit feels lost, as though launched in the firmament alone amid the stars.

Under the clock, on the south side, an extraordinary tomb rests on a massive stone platform. Immense bronze figures, clad in heraldic costume, stand at the four corners. The two foremost represent Leon and Castile, and respectively grasp a lance, headed by a cross, and an oar. Behind are Aragon and Navarre. Their shoulders support a coffin containing the mortal remains of Christopher Columbus.

The great navigator died, at Valladolid, in 1509. His body was brought to Seville, and laid to rest in the convent chapel of Nuestra Senora de las Cuevas, now known as the Cartuja. There it remained until transferred to San Domingo, in Haiti, in 1540. Upon the French taking possession of that island the coffin of the discoverer was shipped to Havana, and solemnly installed in the Cathedral. When Cuba declared its independence, in 1898, the catafalque was brought back to Seville and placed in its present position in the southern transept; a fitting resting place for so great a man.

Fernando Columbus, son of the explorer, sleeps under the pavement between the main door, la Puerta Mayor, and the trascoro, or rear of the choir. A large white marble floor tablet marks the spot, its inscription somewhat obliterated by the tramp of many feet. Keen eyes can still trace the arms and the motto:—

" A Castilla y a Leon
Nuevo mundo dio Colon."

To right and left are smaller tablets, whereon are engraved the three old caravels in which Columbus discovered the New World.

Close by is the Baptistery. The size of the font, an enormous stone basin, is in keeping with that of the Cathedral. Over the altar is one of Murillo's most famous paintings, that of St. Anthony of Padua. The monk is depicted kneeling in his cell, whence the vault has been lifted allowing his enraptured gaze to penetrate to Heaven, where seraphic forms float about the Infant Christ in a glory of celestial light.

The Chapel Royal is immediately behind the High Altar. It is entered through a lofty iron doorway surmounted by life sized figures of San Fernando, mounted on a battle charger, and the Moorish ruler of Seville, who is depicted surrendering the keys of the city, which capitulated on November 23rd, 1248, after a long and heroic resistance.

The domed ceiling of the chapel is lined with tier upon tier of crowned heads, representing the endless sovereigns of Spain. To left an elaborate mural tablet, of black and yellow marble, marks the tomb of Alfonso X, obit 1284, the monarch who bestowed upon Seville the famous motto "She has not forsaken me." Opposite, on the further wall, a similar tablet closes the vault containing the body of his mother, Queen Beatrix.

There are two altars. The lower supports a large silver casse, or reliquary enshrining the bones of San Fernando, the conqueror of Seville, whose pious zeal was such that he is said to have introduced the penalty of boiling alive for unbelievers; doubtless a most powerful persuasive and a great aid to faith. Behind his altar a flight of steps descends to the iron door of the Pantheon, a beautifully decorated vault brilliantly lit up by electricity. Walls and ceiling glow with richly coloured mosaic laid in gold. On the left a glass window closes a deep recess filled with what appear to be small trunks securely bound with brass. These contain the bones of various Kings and Queens of Spain. Among them are those of Pedro the Cruel, and his beautiful favourite, Maria de Padilla, famed alike in song and picture. It is strange how the scandal of one age becomes the romance of succeeding generations.

A tower without steps. This sounds fantastical, none the less it is a true description of the Giralda. The ascent is made by a series of brick paved ramps sufficiently wide for a man to ride up on horseback, a feat which has, I understand, been accomplished more than once. Light is admitted by beautiful arched windows sunk in deep embrasures. Near the top I was startled by the loud crowing of a cock. The mystery was soon explained. A vaulted recess on the right had been converted into a regular farmyard by the bellringers, who had stocked it with pigeons and fowls.

Finally I emerged into the sunlight of the gallery encircling the belfry. I had reached the summit of the Moorish minaret. A brisk breeze was blowing. Overhead hung twenty-three bronze bells of varying size. Each was marked by a cross

and a name of its own—Santa Cruz, San Miguel, Omnium Sanctum and so on. Immediately below lay the Cathedral with its blue and white domes, its whale backed roofs, countless tapering spires, ornate turrets, its gargoyles, myriad saints and angel hosts. All around spread the town, with its strangely varied buildings—the great circular Plaza de Toros, the Hippodrome, the Moorish Palace of the Alcazar and the ancient Torre del Oro, an octagonal tower with a bright yellow dome, standing on the bank of the Guadalquivir. Here, according to tradition, the gold brought from America was stored upon first unloading.

The Alcazar is close to the Cathedral. It is entered from the Plaza del Trionfo through a narrow arched door surmounted by a crown and the royal arms. Within lies the first court, a large quadrangle planted with orange trees. Here Peter the Cruel sat in state to dispense justice. Here, too, he was called upon to decide a case which would have taxed even the wisdom and resource of a Solomon. It so happened that, while on nocturnal adventure bent, he had proceeded, clandestinely, to serenade a lady, who had excited his admiration. On arriving before her casement he had found a rival singing sweetly to the music of a guitar. Enraged at the sight he had plunged his dagger into the heart of the unfortunate musician.

News of the unprovoked murder spread far and wide. No sooner was it reported to Pedro than he affected the greatest indignation. Summoning the Alcalde he informed the unhappy official that his head would be forfeit unless the assassin were forthcoming within three days. Now the tragedy had been witnessed by an old woman, who had recognised the King. She stated the fact to the Alcalde, who caused a dummy to be made in the exact image of Pedro. This he produced in Court on the appointed day. The King accorded it a solemn trial and condemned it to death. Thereupon it was hung in chains on the very spot where the murder was committed.

Little is left of the Palace of the Moorish Emirs, erected from the ruins of the Roman Prætorium. Subsequent Spanish sovereigns have demolished, and built afresh according to the whim of the moment. They retained, however, the arabesque style of decoration, bright tiling and many hued ceilings, into which they introduced gilt crowns and coats of arms, for Spaniards have a passion for enumerating heraldic devices. Every room, passage and underground vault

is of historical interest. Many, alas! are darkened by tragedy.

The Puerta Principal is a splendid portal adorned with Moorish tracery and brilliant azulejos. It commands the Patio de Monteria, or Court of the Royal Bodyguard, a large quadrangle strewn with sand and surrounded by two storeyed yellow buildings. Gaily decorated passages lead thence to the Patio del Doncellas, a vast Moorish court with marble arcades and a central fountain. On the south side stretches the long narrow salon of Charles V of Austria. Off it opens the famous suite once inhabited by Maria Padilla, themorganatic wife of Pedro the Cruel, and their four children. Near by is the Hall of the Ambassadors, its walls covered with geometrical designs, and its lofty dome patterned with stars in gold and colours, above a frieze of the celebrated cell, or honeycomb variety characteristic of the Alhambra at Granada. Four projecting balconies, immediately under the roof, rest upon golden dragons. They were added by the Emperor Charles, whose marriage with Isabella of Portugal was solemnised in the Hall of Ambassadors.

Behind the Throne Room is the dining room of tragic association. Here Pedro the Cruel received his half brother, Fadrigue, the Grand Master of Santiago. Before entering the royal presence the Prince went to pay his respects to Maria de Padilla and her children, in the neighbouring suite. That unhappy lady received him with tears, but dared not warn him of his impending fate. On leaving her he proceeded to the dining room. The King awaited him in the midst of the Ballesteros, or Bodyguard of Clubmen. Their Captain was Lopaz de Padilla, Maria's brother. As the Prince entered the King exclaimed :—

“ Arrest the Master of Santiago ! ”

No sooner was this done than he shouted :—

“ Ballesteros, kill the Master ! ”

Fadrigue instantly made his escape. He fled to the Patio de Muneas, or Doll's Court, so called from two diminutive faces carved on the arch in the north-east corner. Here he was surrounded. In vain he sought to draw his sword. It had become entangled in the scabbard. The Ballesteros promptly despatched him with their maces, by the fountain in the centre.

To west is a small square room, the sleeping apartment of

Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Sovereigns, by whose marriage the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile were united. The walls of their bedroom are covered with their respective coats of arms, and the motto, which they adopted, "Tato mota" (One is as good as the other).

The real charm of the Alcazar lies in its radiant gardens. These lead one from another in a bewildering succession of cypress walks and palm avenues, grottos and Moorish pavilions, marble nymphs and bronze deities, tanks, fountains, water courses and secret mazes. In places the pavement is perforated with a number of holes, so small as to be almost invisible. The turn of a tap converts them into water spouts, whence iridescent spray plays high in the sunshine to flash and gleam with the glittering hues of the rainbow. Doubtless these *bulo d'oros* afforded infinite satisfaction to dead and gone practical jokers.

Steps ascend from one glowing terrace to another. All are fragrant with the perfume of flowers, and musical with the mingled song of birds and the splash of fountains in alabaster basins. Finally a low, iron barred door is reached. Inside is a gloomy passage. The air strikes chill and is charged with the damp musty odour of a vault. A few steps lead to the far famed bath of Maria de Padilla, a long shallow tank, about two feet deep, covered by a ponderous stone roof, and terminating in a neglected grotto. Here tradition declares that the beautiful Maria performed her ablutions in full view of the King and his court. When she had finished, those desirous of ingratiating themselves stooped and drank the water.

The subject is a popular one with painters, who, however, choose to depict the sun-kissed green tank of an upper court added by Charles V and partly screened by walls festooned with jasmine, honeysuckle, roses and blue convolvuli. Certainly it seems a far more fitting bath for beauty than the dismal subterranean vault. Apparently artists, as well as poets, take liberties with the historic muse.

The Lonja, or Exchange, occupies the southern end of the Plaza de Trionfo, and is an immense square two storeyed building, of brick and stone, erected by Philip II. It stands on a flagged terrace of five shallow steps, surrounded by stone pillars linked together with iron chains. A curious tapering spire, topped by a weathercock and cross, appears at each corner of the roof. The large patio in the middle contains a statue of Christopher Columbus. A magnificent stairway

leads up to the Archivo General de Indias, a vast storehouse of documents, charts, maps, and pictures relating to the discovery and subsequent history of America. The nucleus of the collection was made by Fernando Columbus, son of the great navigator. A portrait of the latter depicts him as a man of unusual determination, and strong personality. The face is long, massive and clean shaven; the nose aquiline, the underlip protruding, and the forehead high and broad, marked by ascending eyebrows. Among the treaties is one signed by Napoleon ratifying the session of Louisiana to the French.

A labyrinth of narrow streets leads between whitewashed houses, with green iron balconies gay with flowers in red pots, to the Plaza de Santa Cruz. Here, in the centre of the quiet tree planted square, sleeps Murillo. His grave is a modest one. For sole ornament it is surmounted by a rather fantastical iron work structure and a cross. A plain house, in the adjoining street, was his home. On the wall of No. 2 Plaza Alfaro a tablet states the fact, and adds that Murillo died in it on April 3rd, 1682.

Seville is rich in mural tablets of historical and literary interest. They are not dull slabs of funereal marble but cheerful announcements in brightly coloured tiling. Practically every street and public building sports one or more. The majority set forth in which of Cervantes' plays, or romances, the particular thoroughfare or edifice figures.

I was wandering down the Calle St. Thomas when thirst drove me into a small corner café bearing the suggestive name of Figaro. Here I leisurely sipped a glass of granadino, a rose coloured syrup concocted from pomegranate. Only later did I discover that the unpretentious little restaurant was none other than the shop of the immortal "Barber of Seville."

⁵Near by is the Santa Caridad, the celebrated Poor House for aged paupers, whose private chapel contains no less than six of Murillo's masterpieces, and two by Roldan. This refuge for the indigent was founded in the sixteenth century by a nobleman named Don Miguel Manara. Gautier, with a Frenchman's love of the sensational, tells an amazing story of how Don Miguel came to endow the asylum. The tale depicts the hero as a drunken profligate. Returning one night from a midnight revel he met a funeral procession. The sight somewhat sobered him. He enquired who was to be buried? The reply was startling. He was

informed that it was the corpse of Don Miguel Manara that was being carried past in melancholy state. Doubting that he had heard aright he went up to the coffin and looked in. There he recognised himself. Anxious to see the end of the adventure he fell in behind, and proceeded with the cortège to the church. He witnessed the last solemn rites, and was found insensible on the pavement next morning. From then on he was a changed man. The sinner became a saint and founded the asylum, which has ever since been associated with his name. Hare repeats the legend, as do other writers. There is little doubt but that it has attracted more visitors to the Santa Caridad than even the masterpieces of Murillo and Roldan.

As a matter of fact the mediæval workhouse is a far more attractive place than similar institutions inspired by the cultured philanthropy and science of the twentieth century.

On entering, the stranger steps into a sun-kissed courtyard, where palms and orange trees cast a pleasant shade about two fountains presided over by graceful white marble figures of the Madonna. Aged paupers sit in the wide arcaded cloisters and nod, in friendly fashion, to visitors. An entrance fee of two pesetas is taken by a very stout Sister of Charity, whose stiffly starched white cap stands out from either shoulder like a pair of wings. Key in hand she leads the way to the chapel. Roldan's wonderful "Descent from the Cross" rises above the high altar. The carved wooden figures are vivid with life and colour against a painted back ground: the whole enshrined in massive gold ornamentation. To left and right hang immense pictures by Murillo. One represents Moses striking the rock and the other Christ multiplying the loaves and fishes.

The gallery casts a shadow over the famous painting entitled "Finis Gloria Mundi." The artist has chosen a congenial subject, the vanity of all things human. The better to point his moral he portrays a mitred bishop in his coffin. The rich brocaded cover has rotted away, and the lid fallen off revealing the sharp contrast between splendid vestments and grinning skeleton.

From the chapel the good Sister led me upstairs. We passed through two dormitories lined with double rows of beds, and the gayest of counterpanes. Blue and yellow in the first, yellow and red in the second. She told me that

the asylum takes care of a hundred and twenty old men. Ultimately we reached the Salon de Cabildos. Here I was shown Murillo's signature and the death mask of Don Miguel Manara. The latter puzzled me. It was not the face of a reformed rake. By no effort of imagination could I picture the possessor of that handsome aristocratic countenance, with its clear cut features and firm chin, as a midnight reveller addicted to drunken escapades.

Downstairs a thin Sister came forward and presented me with a small booklet. Its pages set forth the true history of the founder of the Caridad. Alas, for picturesque romance! Don Miguel had led a model life from beginning to end. He was born in Seville, on March 3rd, 1627, in the house now known as No. 23 Calle de Levies. At the age of twenty he married. Never was there more devoted husband. The death of his parents, followed by that of his wife, led him to abandon worldly pursuits and devote himself to good works, of which the Santa Caridad was one.

To tell the truth I was disappointed. The bad Don Miguel had cut a so much more dramatic figure. After all virtue is its own reward. The very Angels in Heaven rejoice more over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine righteous. It was disillusioning to learn that Don Miguel had not afforded them this satisfaction.

Two thousand women are employed in the Tobacco Factory, which is the largest in Spain. Founded in 1757, by Carlos III, it is a palatial yellow edifice of florid design adorned with carved reliefs, and the inevitable display of crowns and coats of arms. For some mysterious official reason visitors are only admitted between 2 and 3 p.m., a somewhat arduous hour for sight seeing when the month happens to be July. The actual building is said to cover more ground than the Cathedral, and consists of three long parallel blocks two storeys in height, divided by stone flagged courts with central fountains. The working hours are from 8 a.m. until 6.30 p.m. The *cigereras* are of all ages. Some are white haired. Others are mere slips of girls. The younger ones wear brightly coloured paper flowers, usually red roses, pinned into their plentiful black tresses. A few have babies in cradles by their side. Quite a number are asleep with their heads pillowed on the narrow tables in front of them. At the end of each long room tapers burn before a little flower decked shrine to the Madonna. The cigars and cigarettes impressed me as

loosely rolled and the women far slower, and less nimble fingered than those I had seen at work upon the same task in Southern India. Having read of the *cigereras* of Seville as inveterate smokers, and chewers of tobacco, I was surprised to see them doing neither the one nor the other.

On the last afternoon of my stay I drove out to Italica, the buried Roman city, the birthplace of those great Emperor's Trajan, Adrian and Theodosius, and of the poet Silius Italicus. The road traversed the large and squalid suburb of Triana, on the further bank of the Guadalquivir. The locality is not a savoury one, despite the odour of sanctity attaching to it as the home of the virgin martyrs Justina and Ruffina, the daughters of a potter and the patron saints of Seville, depicted by Murillo as comely damsels supporting the Giralda in their hands. The earthenware vessels, at their feet, are symbolical of their father's trade. Goya has taken even greater liberties with the subject. According to him the virgin martyrs dressed their hair in the elaborate style of court ladies in the late 18th century, and wore crossover gowns.

On emerging from Triana the road runs almost due west into the effulgence of the setting sun. Below, at either side, are sunken wheat fields. In front stretches a green ridge. Just before reaching the village of Santiponce, the tall walls of the ancient Cistercian Monastery of San Isidoro are passed on the right. It was founded in 1298 by Guzman El Bueno, the heroic defender of Tarifa, and almost totally destroyed by the French, under Soult, in 1812. Fortunately the chapel escaped intact. Entrance is through a small side door, whence a narrow walk leads to the Sacristy characterised by a fine domed ceiling effectively decorated in white and gold, and a number of paintings.

The interior of the Church is rich and curious, and contains tombs of great beauty and unique historical interest. To left and right of the high altar are lofty niches containing kneeling marble figures, lavishly coloured and gilt, of the founder of the Monastery, Alonzo Guzman El Bueno, obit 1309, and of his wife. The inscription on the warrior's grave describes how he fought for King Fernando at Algeciras and Gibraltar, while his lady is likened to the mother of Isaac, in allusion to the sacrifice of her eldest son before the walls of Tarifa. To right of the second splendid altar lies the white marble effigy of Dona Urroca Ossono, the mother of Juan de Guzman. This beautiful and ill-fated



ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE IZNICA



ENTRANCE TO THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE, IZNICA

lady repulsed the advances of Pedro the Cruel, who, in consequence, condemned her to be burnt at the stake. The cruel sentence was executed in 1367. Near her feet the sculptor has introduced a small head, that of her faithful serving maid, who insisted upon perishing in the flames with her mistress.

Beyond the little village of Santiponce a road to the left leads to what appears a confused mass of boulders, green with grass and weeds. A cave-like opening in the debris admits to a dark and lengthy tunnel. This emerges in the Roman arena of Italicus, an immense oval building composed of tier upon tier of receding stone seats. The centre is occupied by a large cruciform tank of considerable depth divided across the middle by a double row of stone pillars. The encircling amphitheatre is a massive construction elaborately tunnelled by a labyrinth of winding passages, dens for wild animals, etc. Above the vast circus the ground rises gently on three sides neatly planted with olive trees.

Nothing could well present a picture of more utter loneliness and ruin. The desert, itself, is not more solitary. Yet here stood the once magnificent city of Italicus founded by Scipio Africanus about 205 B.C. In those days the crumbling arena glowed with life and colour. Its seats and pillars were faced with marble and festooned with flowers. Overhead stretched costly awnings of purple and gold. Incense burnt in censurs and braziers, filling the air with fragrance. Tier above tier flashed with the vivid hues of the rainbow as nobles, magistrates, warriors, patricians, high-born Roman ladies and white clad vestal virgins took their appointed places. A blare of trumpets heralded the approach of the Emperor. The gladiators were the first to enter the arena. As the doomed men filed in each saluted the imperial box with the fatal words: "Ave Caesar imperato moriture te saluta!"

CHAPTER XII

CORDOVA

THE enthusiastic traveller suffers something akin to the pangs of Tantalus on the railway journey between Seville and Cordova. Everything bids him linger, and yet he is hurried inexorably along. Picturesque old towns, with historical names, invite him to investigate their mysteries and explore the treasured wealth of their ancient shrines, a heritage from those centuries when Art and Religion were synonymous.

My train left Seville at 6.45 a.m. Almost immediately a cluster of curiously shaped chimneys drew attention to the Cartuja, an old Carthusian monastery founded in 1401. The remains of Christopher Columbus lay in its chapel from 1509 until 1540, when the great explorer's dying wish was at last complied with, and they were shipped to San Domingo, in Haiti, for burial. In 1839 the Cartuja was converted into a pottery, which has since achieved widespread fame, hence its many chimneys and their peculiar form.

The first long wait was at Gudajoz, the junction for the branch line running out to the celebrated Roman excavations at Carmona. A large and ruined castle and lofty church tower lent distinction to Lora del Rio, a big town of inviting aspect. Penafior, a little further on, was a romantic looking place. The brown roofs of its houses were dominated by a large brightly coloured dome of glazed tiling, which flashed in the brilliant morning sunshine like a gaudy butterfly caught in a swarm of moths. Near it rose an ancient belfry probably once a Moorish minaret. Three black and white cranes stood solemnly lined in a row on its parapet as though deliberating a point of utmost moment. Just before Almodavar del Rio a formidable yellow castle showed up boldly on a precipitous eminence. This was the renowned treasure house of Pedro the Cruel. A large

village, of feudal aspect, straggled over the irregular ground at its foot. Whitewashed walls and brown tiled roofs were aglow with purple bourgainvilliers softened by the green of palms. Finally Cordova was reached shortly after 10 a.m.

With the exception of a few artists the majority of visitors content themselves with a hurried inspection of the great Mosque and then catch the next train on to Madrid, or Seville as the case may be. Such was not my intention. Having secured a room at the Hotel Simon, and declined the services of some half dozen guides, who assailed me volubly in a bewildering jargon of so called French, I started forth imbued with that exhilarating spirit of adventure invariably inspired by novel surroundings.

The once splendid capital of the Western Caliphs is now a drowsy market town. It boasts neither a tram line nor an omnibus. The traffic is mostly limited to donkeys heavily laden with immense rope panniers, which protrude to such an extent as to entirely block the narrow crooked calles of the old quarter. Occasionally a stylish victoria, drawn by a pair of mules, rattles over the cobble stones, whereupon pedestrians avoid annihilation by hastily seeking refuge in the arched doorway of the nearest patio.

The exterior of the world famed Mosque is rather that of a dilapidated fortress than of a temple once reputed the richest and most splendid in Europe. It is jealously screened from view by high embattlemented walls of crumbling yellow stone, to which traces of decoration still adhere in the form of an occasional Moorish arch picked out with arabesques, or zebra-like stripes of red applied with a bold regard for colour effect.

The chief gate is the Puerta del Perdon, a fine horseshoe arch fitted with beautiful metal doors, and surmounted by a square belfry, whereon stands a figure of Faith grasping a banner and cross. Inside stretches the vast stone-paved courtyard of the original Moorish Mezquita planted with palms, cypress and orange trees. A motley crowd is always collected about the central fountain, its four corners marked by tall turret shaped posts. Putty coloured jars of Roman shape are ranged on its encircling parapet awaiting their turn to be filled. Overhead, between the green and yellow of the trees and the clear blue sky, countless swallows wheel and circle in a veritable whirlwind of grey wings. The sunshine filters through the branches to

pattern, with shifting arabesques of gold, the rough pebbles which replace the marble pavement of the Moors.

After their rapid conquest of Spain, in 711, the Arabs proceeded to establish their headquarters at Cordova. On the site now covered by the Mezquita they found the fine old basilica of San Vicente, an edifice of vast proportions and much splendour. Although the severity meted out to the Christians was in sharp contrast to the favour shown to the Jews, the former were allowed to retain half of their original church and continue to practise their religion therein. The remainder was converted into a Muhammadan place of worship, an arrangement whereby the Bible and Koran reposed under the same roof. This continued until the advent of Abdar Rahman, in 755. Prior to that the Arab rulers of Spain had contented themselves with the title of Emir, and had continued subject to the Caliph at Damascus, the universal head of the Muhammadan world, where temporal and spiritual supremacy were synonymous.

Abdar Rahman was the sole survivor of the Ommayad dynasty. As such he was descended from the Caliph Othman, fourth in descent from the Prophet, on whom be peace. Othman belonged to the Ommayad tribe, whereas Muhammad was a member of the rival Hashimite clan. On assuming the leadership Othman was opposed by Ali, the husband of Fatima, the Prophet's favourite daughter. The rebellion was quelled. Ali and his two sons, Hassan and Hussain, fell in battle and the Ommayad retained possession of the Caliphate. Nevertheless, from then on, the Moslem religion was split into two great and irreconcilable sects, the Sunnis, or adherents of Othman, and the Shiah, among whom were the Persians, who had espoused the cause of Ali.

Before long the Ommayads were assailed by Abu-a-Abbas, of the family of Abbas, uncle of the Prophet. In 740 they were defeated and put to death, with the solitary exception of Abd-ar-Rahman, who escaped to Africa, where he was hospitably received by the Berbers, who sheltered him in their tents, until a deputation arrived from Cordova inviting him to become the ruler of Muhammadan Spain. He accepted. No sooner had he crossed the Straits than a formal declaration of independence was pronounced. Prayers were offered up for the Ommayad sovereign of Cordova and not for the Abbaside Caliph in the East.

The latter sought to vindicate his authority by despatching an expedition into Spain. It was defeated and the heads of the leaders sent back to Baghdad shrouded in the black banner of the Abbasides.

In 929 Abd-ar-Rahman III assumed the title of Caliph. According to Moslem law the world can only acknowledge one Caliph, so that his action was tantamount to proclaiming Cordova the headquarters of the faith.

Abd-ar-Rahman I contented himself with establishing his rule firmly in Spain. The mint at Cordova issued coins in his name. He raised his own standard, namely that of the Ommayyads, a long white silk streamer bearing the device of a scarlet hand grasping an azure key. Moreover he purchased the remaining half of the church of San Vicente from the Christians, and proceeded to erect the great Mosque, upon which he is reputed to have laboured daily with his own hands, captives, loaded with chains, assisting in the work. His ambition is said to have been to divert the annual flow of pilgrims from Mecca to Cordova.

The bell shaped mosques of Egypt, and the Jama Masjid of Kairwan served him as models. This raises the moot point as to how far, if at all, Arabian architecture was influenced by existing Roman and Visigothic examples found in Spain, and utilised by the invaders as quarries, whence they drew the building materials for their sacred edifices. Their religion limited their decorations to geometrical designs, and their natural bent for mathematics inclined them to regularity, straight lines and symmetrical effects.

The earliest mosques were faithful reproductions of the primitive House of Prayer built by Muhammad at Medina. The subsequent introduction of minarets suggests that, on reaching Spain, the Arabs borrowed the idea from the Christian belfries, which they found there.

Although accounted a splendid and imposing edifice, the original masjid built by Abd-ar-Rahman occupied considerably less space than the present sanctuary. It consisted of ten rows of columns. The central aisle was wider than the others and terminated in the usual Mihrab, or apse showing the direction of Mecca. On the north was the court for ablutions. His successor Hisham I erected a minaret, whence the Muezzin summoned worshippers to prayer by calling aloud, in lieu of the Christian custom of ringing bells. Abd-ar-Rahman II augmented the number

of aisles and built a second mihrab. Subsequent monarchs still further enlarged and beautified the mosque, which was connected with the Alcazar, the royal palace on the river bank to westward, by an enclosed passage.

The existing Mezquita stretches along the southern side of the Orange Court in a series of eighteen arches originally open, but now closed by a disfiguring wall, with the exception of three, which serve as doors. The entrance to west admits to a small vestibule paved with tombstones conspicuous for elaborate coats of arms. The interior presents a seemingly endless vista of arches. Aisle upon aisle stretches away into the distance with curious and mystifying effect. The rounded columns are of many coloured marbles and the carved capitals display considerable diversity of design. From them spring two tiers of horseshoe arches built of alternate layers of yellow stone and red brick. Hence the zebra-like stripes and the haunting reminder of Egypt.

The encircling walls are lined with mortuary chapels protected by iron grating. One contains the family sepulchre of the Dukes of Hornachuelos dating from 1402. Here a lamp burns perpetually before a picture of the Annunciation. Near by sleep the Counts of Torres in yet another resplendent shrine.

From the central door, the Puerta de las Palmas, the main arcade runs straight through to the mihrab, a marvel of mosaic in gold and colours, the work of Byzantine artists, who were sent as a gift to the Caliph Hisham II by the Emperor of Constantinople. The walls of the central recess are of fretted marble emblazoned with Arabic inscriptions from the Koran in letters of gold, under a roof of snowy marble carved in the graceful likeness of a scallop shell. Here, doubtless, was deposited the copy of the Koran believed to have been traced by the hand of the Caliph Othman from the Prophet's dictation. It was bound in gold and jewels, and piously enveloped in the richest and most costly wrappings. Another precious relic was a bone from Muhammad's arm.

This corner of the mosque gives some idea of what the building must have been like in its prime. Odoriferous woods, cunningly fashioned and gorgeously coloured and gilt, formed the roof, above which rose a dome crowned by two apples of gold and one of silver. As Head of the Faith the Caliph took his stand under the swelling cupola

on a mimbar raised upon four marble columns. He was an imposing figure in a flowing robe of gold tissue shot with green, the deep embroidered border of which repeated his name a thousand times. A purple baldric supported his two edged blade, whereon was inscribed, "Aid is from Allah. Victory is near." On his head he wore an ample turban of snowy muslin, one end of which fell down on his shoulder.

Above swung four thousand six hundred silver chains and eight hundred lamps of the same precious metal, their flame fed by aromatic oils, which emitted a subtle fragrance when burning. Conspicuous among them were the bells of Sant Iago carried off from that sacred shrine by Almazar on his famous raid in 997. When King Ferdinand III stormed Cordova, on June 29th, 1236, he promptly condemned a convoy of Muhammadan captives to carry them back to Campostella on their shoulders. There, they were restored to their original use as Christian bells, after having served as lamps to the infidels for well nigh three hundred years.

The Mosque remained the most wonderful and surprising edifice of the kind in Europe until the reign of Charles V. Taking advantage of the fact that the Emperor had never been to Cordova and had, therefore, not seen it, the Cathedral Chapter solicited permission to erect a choir therein. This was accorded and the work begun in 1523 from plans drawn by Ruiz, the elder. When too late Charles discovered the irreparable havoc which had been wrought. Surveying it he exclaimed: "You have built what you, or others might have built anywhere, but you have destroyed what was unique in the world."

As a matter of fact the offending choir is a very fine specimen of architecture in the plateresque style. It is enclosed by deep walls. The carving of the stalls is wonderful. Each is different. The lower row represent a succession of martyrdoms with that relish for painful details, which seems a peculiar gift of Spanish artists. The upper depicts scenes from the Scriptures. The arched roof is superbly decorated with figures and armorial bearings in white and gold. Light is admitted by clear glass windows ranged in pairs. Splendidly illumined music books of gigantic size rest on the great carved facistol.

A dome rises above the centre of the transept. More white and gold figures adorn the ceiling over the high altar,

a silver tabernacle behind which is a reredos of five painted panels sunk in red marble and gold. In front swings a silver lamp weighing a hundred and eighty-four kilos. To left, in the brick pavement, is a modest black marble tombstone inscribed Pedro Duque Cornejo, obit 1757, aged eighty. This inconspicuous floor tablet commemorates the architect, who devoted so many years of his life to beautifying the coro and two pulpits. The latter are most remarkable. The one to left is of wood elaborately carved in the same style as the choir stalls. It appears to grow up as naturally as a tree out of a rock from a base of white marble, whereon reposes an allegorical figure and an eagle. The canopy is upheld by an angel blowing a trumpet, on one side, and a draped female form holding an open book, on the other. The pulpit to right is somewhat similar and rests upon a white marble angel and a lion. The combination of snowy marble and dark wood, the carvings of which merge one into the other, is very striking and beautiful.

Nothing could exceed the contrast between the sumptuously decorated Cathedral in the centre, with its heavy atmosphere of incense, and the shadowy Moorish arcades that stretch around on every side, dim, mysterious, austere, and baffling. The curious impression of unreality is enhanced when the organ peals forth, and the chanting of priests and choir penetrates the long colonnades, which once echoed the sonorous verses of the Koran. Two opposing influences make themselves acutely felt. The one typifies mediæval Europe with its splendour, its asceticism, its sensuous beauty, religious fervour and pagan exuberance of display. The other breathes the spirit of the desert, the call of the wild and of the infinite, where man finds himself alone with the sand and the sky, and must look to the lights of heaven alone for guidance.

The Sala Capitular contains the usual wealth of gold, silver and gem encrusted ornaments. The finest is an immense eighteenth century custodia in the form of a cathedral modelled in silver, with golden bells and studded with diamonds and large emeralds. A conspicuous monument is the white marble effigy of Cardinal Don Pedro Salazar, obit 1706, who is depicted on his knees with hands clasped in prayer. Every minute detail of lace and embroidery is faithfully reproduced. Unlike older statues of the kind it is not coloured. Eight painted and gilt life sized figures of Saints are the work of Jose de Mora, who

represents Santa Teresa with a dove on her shoulder. An exquisite ivory crucifix, by Alonso Cano, expresses the death agony of the Saviour with painful realism.

To west of the Mezquita the irregular cobble paved street is overlooked by a number of very old buildings. Among them is the Foundling Hospital. Near it stands a plain two storeyed house its windows barred, and its walls tinted the colour of a pumpkin. In it Ambrosia de Morales died on September 21st, 1591. Beyond stretches the great Palace of the Archbishop built around the customary tree planted, cloister encircled patio. The southern end of the Calle terminates at a curious and lofty monument. The base is of natural rock carved into the semblance of a lion, a horse, an eagle, a palm tree and angel forms. On this stands a small round tower with a low arched door, whence soars a tall Corinthian column on which stands the Archangel Raphael with outspread wings grasping a sword. A marble scroll bears the celebrated inscription: "Yo te juro por Jesu Christo crucificado que soi Rafael Angel, a quien Dios tiene puesto por guarda de esta ciudad."

The Archangel Raphael is the guardian of Cordova. The monument commemorates a visit paid by the Archangel to a priest named Don Andres Roela, on May 7th, 1758, to whom the celestial visitor imparted his name, and the fact that the ancient city had been placed under his special protection. The column was raised by public subscription to commemorate the blessed vision. Bishop Pascal, well known for his devotion to the Archangel, lies buried in the plinth.

A little to east stands a splendid gateway of classical design erected by Philip II on the site of the Moorish Bab-al-Kantara. Below it the Guadalquivir is crossed by a handsome bridge of sixteen arches, its further end protected by strong towers and a fortified door. The river here is very wide but shallow. From its turbid waters emerge several ruined white buildings known as the old Moorish mills.

To west, on the bank, still frown the high yellow battlemented walls and bastions of the Alcazar, the citadel erected by Abd-ar-Rahman, and added to by Alfonso XI in 1328. Not only was Abd-ar-Rahman a great builder, he was an enthusiastic gardener. In Cordova he planted the first palm brought from his far away home in Syria, and introduced the cultivation of cotton, sugarcane and bananas.

The arts and crafts also flourished. The stamped and gilt leather work of Cordova achieved such fame that the French term *cordonnier*, for bootmaker, was derived therefrom, as was the English word *cordwainer*. Silk weaving was another thriving industry. Science and learning were revived and the Arab University of Cordova attracted students from all parts of the world. So great was the city's reputation for medical skill that, in 959, Sancho the Fat, King of Leon, concluded a treaty with Abd-ar-Rahman III in order that he might come to Cordova to be cured of his excessive corpulency by a Jewish doctor named Hasdai, whom the Caliph would not permit to leave his realm.

Behind the Alcazar, before the gates of which sentries mount guard, lies the Sacred Field of Martyrs, a large dusty square planted with palms and plane trees. Here numerous Christians were beheaded for seeking to make converts, and for denouncing the faith professed by their conquerors in the great Mosque, the yellow dome of which is visible through the branches.

No traces remain of the Golden Palace, the wonderful Azahra built by Abd-ar-Rahman II, some five miles outside Cordova. It is said to have numbered no less than four thousand three hundred pillars. All the floors were of marble with sunken water channels and basins of porphyry. Fountains played throughout the long hot days and brilliant star lit nights. In the great Hall of Ambassadors was a jasper fountain, whence water spouted from the bill of a golden swan. An immense pearl, a gift from the Emperor of Constantinople, hung suspended from a canopy overhead. The wood work was of cedar, cunningly wrought, coloured, gilt and inlaid with ivory and mother o' pearl. All around stretched gardens, gateways pierced by horseshoe arches and pavilions into which the daylight filtered through fretted screens.

After the death of Abd-ar-Rahman III in 961 the power of the Caliphate began to wane. Puppet Caliphs led a luxurious existence in the Azahra leaving their realm to be overrun and sacked by fanatical hordes of Berbers from Africa, wild warriors of the desert, fired by all the zeal of recent converts. Finally Cordova was captured by the Christians, and the western Caliphate extinguished.

Towards evening the sleepy old town begins to show signs of waking up. The fashionable promenade is the Paseo del Gran Capitan, so called after Gonsalvo de Cordoba, the

greatest Spanish General of his day, whose conquest of Naples would have been but a prelude to even more brilliant triumphs but for the jealousy of King Ferdinand, the Catholic.

The popular thoroughfare is divided down the centre by a broad walk lined with small tables. These fill rapidly. Waiters are kept busy serving frozen custard and various drinks concocted from fruit syrups which, although doubtless innocuous, appear to unaccustomed palates too sweet to be wholesome. Gaily garbed, hatless children run to and fro accompanied by trimly dressed nurses, whose dark tresses are confined by lace edged muslin kerchiefs wound, turban fashion, round the head to form a projecting point at the back. With them mingle soldiers, officers and countrymen in wide brimmed felt hats, girls with flowers in their hair and fans, gypsies, countrywomen in shawls carrying baskets, and blind, armless, legless and palsied members of the great fraternity of beggars. Carriages drive slowly up and down at a pace which, in conjunction with the black garments and sombre mantillas of the occupants, suggests a funeral procession. Innumerable swallows circle, twittering noisily, overhead. At either side stretch buildings, rose, yellow, amethyst, turquoise and green. Far off, against the fading blue of the sky, rises an irregular line of mountains, while every quarter of an hour the clash of bells sounds from many belfries.

CHAPTER XIII

ARANJUEZ

A LONG and very hot night journey, in a crowded railway carriage, brought me to Aranjuez shortly before 8 o'clock on a brilliant July morning. The problem of an hotel was quickly solved. There was but one, the former palace of the notorious Godoy, better known by his curious title of Principe del Paz, or Prince of the Peace. This fact not only invested my temporary quarters with an interest, which they would not otherwise have possessed, it seemed to bring me into personal touch with the past history of the royal borough, and particularly with those celebrated actors in the palace drama, at once a tragedy and a farce, played here with fatal national results in 1808.

For centuries the old Real Sitio de Aranjuez was the recreation ground of Spanish sovereigns and their court. Apparently it first came into prominence in 1387, when the great military order of St. Iago chose it as the site of a palatial monastery. Later on it was the favourite summer resort of Queen Isabella the Catholic. Charles V erected a shooting box, which Philip II enlarged, and embellished from plans drawn by Juan Bautista and Herrero, the architects of the Escorial. After his marriage with his cousin, Queen Mary of England, the King brought over a number of British elms and planted them at Aranjuez, which is now a vast park. Apparently the fact that elms abound here, and on the hill of the Alhambra at Granada, has inspired the statement, made by so many foreign writers, that they are not to be found anywhere in Spain but at these two places. Personally I have seen them in at least half a dozen others.

Aranjuez presents the appearance of a forest. Every road is a splendid avenue losing itself in the green distance. The jade coloured Tagus winds its course between banks fringed with reed and densely growing trees. The pervading atmosphere is singularly peaceful. A couple of old labourers

sit by the dusty wayside playing cards, while a third munches a cucumber in absorbed contemplation of the game.

All around stretch royal parks, royal gardens and royal palaces, admirably kept, but lifeless as empty snail shells.

Aranjuez has never recovered from the catastrophe, which overwhelmed that debonnair sovereign Carlos IV among the green shadows and flickering golden sunlight of its many trees. The disaster likewise wrecked the fortunes of his pleasure loving Queen, Maria Luisa and their favourite Godoy. The fact that I was living in the palace of the last named, sleeping in his very bedroom, perhaps, made me take a personal interest in his affairs, and almost, if not quite, feel a certain degree of sympathy with his reverses. The exterior of the historical building is plain, as befitted the residence of a royal favourite. Long, three storeyed and buff coloured the façade is unbroken excepting for a row of iron balconies, which project from the central tier of windows. Within are two narrow gloomy courtyards. In one a small door, deeply sunk in the sloping pavement, is the entrance to the famous subterranean passage, which once led through to the Royal Palace. Scandal, that wicked fairy godmother of history, avers that it was freely used by both the Queen and Godoy.

The interior of the favourite's residence is traversed by long dark galleries with rooms opening off to right and left. The one allotted me was a truly splendid apartment of vast proportions. The three doors were covered with old brocade in a rich shade of emerald, and were remarkable for small handles and catches of beautifully chased brass work. Each of the large French windows opened on to a balcony that looked down upon the green tops of trees. The furniture would have delighted an antiquary until he sat down upon it. Personally I confess to causing the collapse of a couple of sofas and some half dozen chairs. What attracted me most were two portraits in oils, which hung side by side on the wall opposite my bed. One was of a placid faced elderly lady in the dress of a century ago, who sat very erect holding a white Pomcranian dog in her lap. The other was of an ancient gentleman wearing a high red velvet cap. His eyes were the most wonderfully lifelike ever painted. Small, black and acute they actually twinkled every time that they met mine. There was no escaping them. They seemed to follow me about, compel my attention and read my thoughts. At night they were particularly uncanny.

I am not one of those imaginative people for whom every old building must, perforce, be haunted. At the same time I should not have been greatly surprised had I come upon Godoy muffled in his cloak, his wide brimmed felt hat drawn well down over his brows, making furtively towards the low doorway of the subterranean passage in the courtyard.

The remarkable career of the favourite places him in the category of those celebrated personages, whom Shakespeare classifies as having "greatness thrust upon them." From 1792 until 1808 he directed the destinies of Spain. Despite the fact that he was hated by the nation in general, and by the heir to the throne, Don Fernando, Prince of the Asturias, in particular, the control of both foreign and internal policy rested exclusively with him, and this through no merit, or effort of his own, but purely owing to royal patronage.

When Charles IV came to the throne, in 1788, Godoy occupied the modest position of a private in the Bodyguard. He was then twenty years of age. As a member of an impoverished noble family his education had been of the scantiest. It is alleged by his detractors that he could scarcely read and write. To compensate for these limitations he possessed a fine singing voice and could perform upon various musical instruments. In appearance he was large, showy and florid. Queen Maria Luisa took an immediate fancy to him. Curiously enough the King shared her infatuation.

Charles IV was easy going, good natured and weak. These characteristics are emphasised in his many portraits, which depict him as stout and jovial looking, a typical bon viveur, with the light prominent eyes, large curved nose and receding forehead and chin of the Bourbons. His one interest in life was hunting. This he pursued with enthusiasm. In matters of state he was completely ruled by Maria Luisa. Her name was coupled with his in official documents. Furthermore they were styled *Los Reyes*, after the manner of Ferdinand and Isabella three centuries earlier. She was his first cousin, the daughter of his uncle, Don Philip, Duke of Parma. The relationship between them was rendered still closer by the fact that her mother was also a Bourbon, a daughter of Louis XV of France.

Contemporaries describe Maria Luisa as intriguing, irresponsible and unscrupulous. All real power was vested in her. The King allowed her to do exactly as she pleased. Within four years she advanced Godoy to the proud position

of a grandee of Spain. He received the title of Duke, and the post of Prime Minister. Next she arranged a marriage for him with a royal princess, the Infanta Teresa, a cousin of the King. Charles raised no objection to a mesalliance without precedent in the history of the Bourbons. Three years later Godoy was created Principe de la Paz, in commemoration of his share in the questionable Peace Treaty of Basle.

For sixteen years Godoy continued in undisturbed enjoyment of the highest offices in the realm, honours and wealth. He was enormously rich from the sale of Government positions, commissions, bribes, royal gifts and speculations on the Stock Exchange. The French Ambassador left on record how he had been required to keep the signing of the peace treaty a secret for three days, in order that Godoy might complete his purchase for a rise before the good news got abroad.

Corrupt he undoubtedly was and licentious, nevertheless the Prince of Peace had some good qualities. He exerted his influence to suppress bull fighting, and endeavoured to establish vaccination. He was a collector of pictures and antiquities, and his Palace at Aranjuez was a veritable museum. Although virtually in possession of sovereign power he began to dream of becoming a king in name as well as in deed. Napoleon read him aright and baited his trap accordingly with the promise of the Algarves and Alemtejo. In the astute Corsican Godoy met more than his match.

The first warning of danger came from Portugal in the autumn of 1807. Napoleon effected the conquest of the western realm with surprising ease. On November 30th Junot entered Lisbon at the head of fifteen hundred worn out, ragged and starving troops, to whom the capital succumbed without a blow. The Prince Regent had fled on the previous day, embarking for Rio de Janeiro with his insane mother, the remainder of his family and all his portable possessions. These, with his court and their belongings, had filled the fifteen men o' war composing the Portuguese fleet.

Napoleon next turned his attention to Spain. From the first he had determined upon the downfall of the Bourbons, their close proximity seeming a menace to his newly founded dynasty. The command of the French expeditionary force was given to his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, who promptly seized all the frontier fortresses.

Godoy was panic stricken. He was then forty years of

age, and at the height of his wealth and power. He immediately withdrew the garrison from Madrid to Aranjuez, where the court was in residence for the months of March and April. Here news was received that Murat had occupied Burgos. Believing all lost Godoy at once decided to escape with the King and Queen to Seville, and there embark for Mexico, or Buenos Ayres. The flight was to be secret and was planned for the night of March 18th.

Aranjuez was crowded with refugees, and packed with troops hastily summoned by Godoy. The majority were persuaded that the Prince of Peace was a traitor who had deliberately plotted to betray the country to the invaders, hence they were in a dangerous mood and not to be trifled with.

Godoy commenced by sending off the object of his most tender solicitude, Dona Josepha Tudo. The lady was entrusted to an armed escort and started under cover of darkness on March 17th. She was promptly surrounded by a number of volunteers who, distrusting the Prince of Peace, had banded themselves together to watch the Palace. A skirmish ensued. The firing of a pistol attracted an excited mob, who credited a rumour that the King and Queen were being carried off in this clandestine fashion. Crowds surged round the favourite's residence, which was strongly guarded by soldiers. These, however, offered no resistance owing, probably, to the fact that the throng was largely composed of their own comrades, who had broken out of barracks.

¶ An entrance was soon effected. The entire place was ransacked but without result. Godoy could not be found. In their rage the assailants smashed the many art treasures and furniture, which they flung out of the window and made into a bonfire. They next proceeded to the Palace and demanded that he should be given up to them. Not knowing what to do the King and Queen implored their son to intervene. Don Fernando stepped out on to a balcony and promised that directly he was found the favourite should be dismissed. At this the crowds cheered wildly and dispersed.

All the while Godoy lay, trembling with fear, under a pile of mats beneath the rafters of his house. Here he remained for two days, at the conclusion of which time the pangs of hunger and thirst drove him forth. Wrapping himself in the folds of a voluminous mantle, and concealing his face with a slouched hat, he tried to reach the Palace but was recognised. Rioting burst forth and he would have been

killed, but for the intervention of the Royal Guard, who bore him captive to the King's presence. Practically the whole population of Aranjuez assembled outside the Palace windows clamouring for his immediate execution. Charles perceived that it was a case of his throne or his favourite. Rather than sacrifice the latter he abdicated there and then. Don Fernando, whose detestation of the favourite endeared him to the populace, was acclaimed King amid scenes of the wildest enthusiasm. Godoy was safely hurried off to the castle of Villaviciosa, where he remained a prisoner until sent for by Napoleon to join the ex-King and Queen, at Bayonne.

The Royal Palace, where these epoch making events occurred, is a long two storeyed edifice of pink brick and light biscuit coloured stone, with projecting side wings and encircling arcades, dominated by twin cupolas of grey tiles surmounted by slender pavilions, each of which culminates in an iron cross. The back rises above the green depths of a wide canal, which falls with musical splash over a cascade of four stone tiers, so that the ears of those in the Palace are perpetually refreshed by the cool murmur of running water.

Known as the *Jardin de la Isla* the grounds were laid out by Philip II, who brought over a number of camels to work therein, a custom which was kept up until the reign of Isabella II. Schiller made the garden the setting of his drama "Don Carlos." The front of the Palace is gay with elaborate flower beds and large stone tanks, whence rise the most ornate of fountains profusely decorated with white marble gods, nymphs and amphibious monsters. The first, facing the entrance gate, is a stupendous monument of the kind, a combined grotto and pavilion engraved with the motto "Ne plus ultra" and presided over by a large stone statue of Hercules, the prehistoric King credited with founding Cadiz and afterwards deified by the Greeks, for men have ever been prone to look for their gods on earth. To right and left of the fountain rise tall columns respectively inscribed Avila and Calpe.

The eastern side of the garden is washed by the Tagus, which sweeps with a rush and a roar over a natural weir. At the back of the Palace stretch long avenues of elms, chestnuts and other trees varied by an occasional fountain. A bronze Bacchus sits astride a barrel, holding aloft a wine cup, and Neptune grasps his accustomed trident. Nothing disturbs the silence but the splash of falling water and the

song of countless birds. Solitude is the presiding deity of that enchanted garden where, of old, Kings and Queens paced to and fro amid the gilded shadows, courtiers whispered and ministers wove their secret web of state intrigue.

The ordinary tourist enters the Palace through a modest grey door in the long arcaded cloister to west. It faces a large empty square, probably once a parade ground, shaded by a few elms and plane trees. My official permit named 9 a.m. as the hour of admittance. It was a little past the stipulated time when I presented myself before the door, only to find it closed. A profound stillness reigned, and that drowsy hush, which is a characteristic of Spanish days in marked contrast to Spanish nights. There was no one in sight nor, apparently, within hearing but a small boy, who had newly attached himself to me with barnacle-like tenacity. He now proved his mettle. Raising his voice he shouted "Alfonso!" This he repeated, at brief intervals, for the next ten minutes until, finally, an owner appeared to claim the name. Thereafter I was led up a marble staircase adorned with the bust of Louis XIV, and through innumerable apartments uniformly carpeted with an attractive variety of matting. The pervading atmosphere was that of a museum and proportionately depressing. If there is anything in the world more melancholy than an empty house it is an empty palace.

The walls of the dining room are hung with paintings of fruit and game and its windows frame infinitely attractive views of the Tagus, the canal and tree planted garden. Frescoes cover the walls and ceiling of the Oratorio. The throne room is long and narrow, its walls, curtains and upholstery of crimson velvet. A low dais of two steps, under a red canopy, supports the thrones, which are merely a couple of gilt armchairs. The music room is hung with blue, and leads through to a quaint corner chamber the decorations of which date from Charles III. Walls and ceiling are completely covered with white porcelain patterned with brightly coloured Japanese figures and scenes in high relief, amid which are inset mirrors flanked by many branched candelabras. The tiles were designed by Ghicci, a Neapolitan, and made at the Retiro porcelain factory in Madrid, in 1763.

The Queen's bedroom is upholstered in pale yellow brocade and the ceiling is painted. The big mahogany bed stands upon the brass paws of a lion. Above the head hangs a large painting of the crucified Saviour. From one of the

windows I took a snapshot of the garden. Rose patterned broche furnishes the curtains and wall hangings of the neighbouring dressing room, which contains four full length mirrors.

The smoking room is decorated after the Moorish style of the Alhambra with vividly hued arabesque mouldings and a honeycomb ceiling, whence swings a very fine brass chandelier fitted with candles. Near by is the King's sleeping apartment upholstered in red and yellow, the Spanish colours. The ante-chamber contains Espalter's picture *L'Ultimo Sospiro del Moro* (The Last Sigh of the Moor). Boabdil is depicted taking his farewell look at Granada ere the mountain pass shuts out the view for ever.

The bridge across the Tagus is strikingly ornamented with great stone figures mounted on lofty pedestals. Those at the southern end represent Mexican Indians, while those at the other extremity portray Spanish Conquistadores in the dress of the sixteenth century. Near here a sign board, on the river bank, announced a trip by motor launch to the Casa del Labrador and back for one peseta fifty centimos. Several passengers had taken their seats. The engine was throbbing in earnest of an immediate start when I stepped on board. Hardly had I done so than an individual in a black peaked cap, and long white dust coat came up to me. Speaking in pigeon English he informed me that the fare was twenty pesetas. To his great dismay I immediately got out. Apparently he had fleeced other foreigners with happier results for he followed begging me to return, and greatly modifying his demands.

As a matter of fact it is a short tree shaded walk to the celebrated miniature palace built by Carlos IV in 1803, and nicknamed the Casa del Labrador, or Labourer's Cottage. Apparently the idea was borrowed from the Petit Trianon, wherein Marie Antoinette had been wont to play at rustic pursuits and the simple life, a rôle in which she was just about as realistic as a Dresden china shepherdess.

Don Carlos had learnt little or nothing from the lessons of the French revolution. For him the Divine right of Kings warranted the expenditure of vast sums upon pastimes as costly and frivolous as this. His toy palace stands in the spacious grounds of the Jardin del Principe. It is guarded by handsome gates, whence a long avenue of white blossomed magnolia trees leads, between shadowy woods musical with the song of nightingales, to a mansion of gleaming white stone and rose coloured brick under a sloping roof of grey tiles.

Three sides embrace a central court enclosed, in front, by a lofty and richly ornamented iron railing the design picked out with gold. The façade is adorned with niches filled with marble statues, the royal arms and a small fountain surmounted by three hideous masks representing Hunger, Thirst and Envy. The last is a Medusa-like head wreathed with serpents.

No words could describe the riches of the interior. The winding marble staircase has a splendid bannister said to be of silver heavily plated with gold. The ceilings are by Velasquez and depict a variety of mythological subjects. The walls are hung with rare tapestries and choice brocades, many of which are embroidered by hand. The floors are of marble, and one is of Roman mosaic transferred from Merida. Equally beautiful and rare the furniture is worthy of the setting. In the billiard room is the table upon which Carlos IV played with a marvellous cue inlaid and wrought with silver.

Maria Luisa's special salon is a large square apartment, wherein the Queen trod upon flower painted porcelain tiles. Off it opens the ball room containing superb Sevres vases, a gift from Napoleon I. Possibly the most interesting picture is a hunting scene, which occupies the entire side of a small apartment. Carlos IV is depicted bare headed in a brown costume talking to Godoy, represented as a tall dissipated looking man in light blue and a wide brimmed hat. The Prince of Peace has a distinctly forbidding countenance, the face of a man for whom life holds neither ideals nor illusions. On the back stairs Velasquez has adorned the wall with a fresco of his two sons and his wife, a pretty auburn haired woman, with long earrings, black mantilla and fan, leaning over a balcony.

On the opposite bank of the Tagus stands the Real Casa de Marinos, built by Carlos III in connection with a scheme to render the river navigable as far as Lisbon. Subsequently it was utilised as a boat house, which purpose it continues to serve. In it are stored the royal barges and the miniature bronze cannon used for firing salutes. The launch of Carlos IV displays a magnificent canopy of crimson silk fringed with silver and upheld by winged gilt figures. A cupid, bow in hand, adorns the bows. It was worked by fourteen oars.

While waiting for dinner, in the evening, I used to sit on a decrepid wicker chair outside the front door of Godoy's palace, a prey to mosquitoes and ants. A barrel organ, drawn by a donkey, appeared regularly at about 8 p.m. It was

quite the most popular institution in Aranjuez. At the first notes all the children congregated and the girls began to dance. On Sunday two of them gave a spirited representation of the katchuka, the others preferring the modern two-step. In the midst several boys broke in with a volley of fireworks, and scattered the dancers, who treated the joke with the utmost good humour. After dinner there was more music. From ten until midnight a military band played. Aranjuez is a cavalry station.

At 7 a.m. on Monday morning I started for the station, my kit on a hand truck pushed by the hotel factotum, a scarecrow in appearance but an invaluable man, active, resourceful and intelligent. He met trains, ran errands and washed dishes ; was first on the scene in the morning and last at night. On parting I experienced something closely akin to a pang of regret as the good fellow shook hands, and bade me the usual "Felix Viaje."

CHAPTER XIV

MADRID

AKING'S infirmity is the alleged cause of Madrid's rise to greatness. Popular belief holds that Charles V found the keen dry air so beneficial to his gout that he promoted what was then an insignificant townlet to be the capital of Spain. As a matter of fact the change was not effected during his reign. It was his son, Philip II, who formally declared Madrid the royal residence and *unica Corte*, in 1560.

Not being a sufferer from gout the anecdote failed to impress me as much as it seems to have done other travellers. On the contrary, what I had heard and read about the Spanish metropolis had rather prejudiced me against it. I was all the more agreeably surprised to find the approach unmarred by sordid slums, the dirty bedraggled fringe of modern civilisation, where the rule seems to be that the greater the display of wealth, the greater the contrasting squalor.

The Estacion del Mediodia lies at the southern end of the Prado, the Piccadilly of Madrid. On emerging from the terminus, an imposingly decorated edifice, the newcomer finds himself in a spacious thoroughfare laid out with roads for wheeled traffic, and shady avenues for pedestrians. A turn, on the left, brings him to the crowded business heart of the city, the Puerta del Sol, a large oblong space traversed by a network of tram lines. Steps, in the centre, lead down to the underground railway. All around stretch shops and cafés. Ten streets radiate from the so-called Door of the Sun, a name derived from the old city gate which formerly stood here, but of which no traces survive. Gautier describes a church as occupying the site, its façade washed a bright rose colour and further enlivened by a sun with golden rays. This landmark has also disappeared.

The Puerta del Sol is always thronged. The pavements are blocked with pedestrians, some hurrying along, others

loitering, while the roadway is choked with an endless succession of brilliant yellow electric trams, one horse victorias, with sealing wax red wheels, for hire at four pesetas an hour, motor cars and great carts drawn by oxen. Towards sunset the scene is particularly animated. Every house and shop pours forth its occupants. The fashionable world betakes itself to the Buen Retiro, the Hyde Park of Madrid. Ladies, and even young girls appear in hats. The poorer classes prefer the Botanical Gardens and shawls. Mantillas are only seen at bull fights, but fans are universally carried by the entire feminine population who, curiously enough, never seem to use parasols.

The Palace is easily accessible. It is an immense building and relies for effect upon its size rather than for any particular architectural merit. Situated to west of the town it occupies a commanding position on the brow of a wooded slope, which drops, in a succession of tree planted terraces, to the Manzanares, a river that has excited much satirical comment and numerous mirth provoking sallies. Its dried-up bed has proved an inexhaustible source of humour for successive generations of wits, among whom was the facetious courtier who, upon completion of the massive bridge built by Philip IV remarked, to the King, that he had better sell his bridge, or else buy a river.

In the tenth century a fortified Moorish outpost, known as the Alcazar, stood on the site of the royal residence. On its southern side lay the small settlement of Madjrit. The place was captured by Alfonso VI in 1038. One of his first acts was to convert the Mosque into the Church of the Virgin of Almudena. Houses were built and the town soon spread to the Puerta del Sol. A subsequent lawsuit, between the inhabitants and the clergy, resulted in a verdict assigning the forests to the former, and the pasture lands to the latter, hence the arms of the city, a bear rampant under an arbutus tree.

In 1383 John I conferred the lordship of the city upon Leo V, the last Armenian King, who had been driven from his dominions by the all conquering Moslems. On the death of the exiled monarch, Madrid reverted to Castile. In it Ferdinand IV assembled the first Cortes, in 1429. Charles V visited the town in 1521, at which date it numbered some three thousand inhabitants. Four years later Francis I was brought here a prisoner after the battle of Pavia. The French King was confined in the still existing Torre de los

Lujanes, and, subsequently, in the Alcazar, until released in the following January. After Philip II had formally proclaimed Madrid his capital, in 1560, the remaining forests were cut down to defray the expenses of the court. Owing to lack of accommodation courtiers and nobles were billeted upon the owners of large houses, who greatly resented the imposition. In order to be free from it those about to build took care to erect small dwellings of a single storey. As a result Madrid remained a badly planned, and insanitary city peopled by a constantly shifting population dependent upon the movements of the sovereign. This unsatisfactory state of affairs continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the advent of the Bourbons worked a change for the better.

The Palace dates from the new dynasty. It was begun in 1738, by Louis I on the ruins of the royal residence erected by Philip II on the site of the Alcazar, and destroyed by fire, in 1734. The great pile is of light coloured stone adorned with groups of Doric pillars, under a flat roof protected by a balustrade and bristling with tall chimneys. The front looks south on to a vast quadrangle, entrance to which is barred by a lofty iron railing. Sentries, in dark blue uniforms their shakos banded with white and red, are posted at the gates, before which women stand selling fruit.

To west stretches the Armeria, a long narrow gallery lined with figures of steel clad warriors and their chargers. Philip I (1504-6) heads the procession grasping a sword taller than himself. He is dressed in grey silk hose and a coat of mail, under a tunic of crimson velvet and yellow silk scalloped at the bottom. His low crown-shaped helmet has the vizor raised. Another figure of the same short lived monarch depicts him with a tilting lance twenty feet long, and a helmet trimmed with ostrich feathers, which fall in a long tail behind. Similar plumes are affixed to the head piece of the charger. Apparently Charles V had a fondness for armour. Over a score of suits pertaining to him are preserved, including the one in which he posed for the portrait, by Tiziano, now displayed in the Museo del Prado. The litter, in which he was carried when suffering from one of his periodical attacks of gout, is a clumsy and ponderous contrivance. The body resembles a great wooden chest and is covered with leather, and cloth of gold under a waggon shaped hood.

The armour worn by Philip II and Philip III is splendidly

decorated with damascene work. San Fernando's sword is conspicuous for the breadth of the blade, the scabbard being of gold set with jewels. There are a number of diminutive suits of armour belonging to various *infantos* as children. The model of a dog, completely encased in armour with a tuft of nodding green ostrich plumes attached to the head-piece, dates from the sixteenth century. Trained dogs were employed in battle to harass cavalry.

War trophies include a quantity of Turkish weapons taken at the naval battle of Lepanto, and the tent of King Francis I, captured at Pavia, in 1525, a truly regal pavilion of crimson velvet and richly embroidered silk applique. The sword of the vanquished monarch was also kept in the Armeria, whence it was removed by Murat, in April 1808. Upon the incident being reported to Napoleon he committed a couple of surprising historical blunders. "Why trouble about the sword?" he wrote. "Francis I was a Bourbon, and was captured by the Italians, not the Spaniards."

A roofed terrace joins the armoury to the Palace. Openings in the pavement, protected by iron grating, penetrate a great depth to the foundations. To west is a wide view of open country. The eye travels over the green tops of trees to the Manzanares winding its narrow course between flat sandy banks; just such another dry river bed as is so often encountered in Asia.

Immediately to south of the Palace a few walls, scattered pillars, and an unsightly display of scaffolding mark the site of the new Cathedral commenced in 1895 and dedicated to Our Lady of Almudena. The view is the reverse of inspiring, nevertheless the crypt is completed and may be visited for the modest fee of twenty-five centimos. After descending eight flights of stone steps the astonished stranger finds himself in a vast and beautiful subterranean Cathedral, the immense columns and rounded pillars of which are remarkable for the size and variety of the sculptured capitals. The pavement is of white marble interspersed with decorative bronze memorial tablets. The high altar stands at the north end. Behind it the wide ambulatory is lined with splendid mortuary chapels and tombs, carved, coloured and gilt with all the richness and skill of jewels. Five aisles, of alternate round and U shaped Roman arches, are cunningly and effectively ranged with an eye to that mystery which is such a powerful stimulant to devotion. At the same time there is light in plenty. The setting sun streams through the

stained glass windows patterning the white marble floor with the glowing reflection of many coloured saints.

To east of the Palace lies the Plaza de Oriente, the largest open space in the city. It is laid out as a garden, the encircling pavement being ringed round with forty-four square stone pedestals, whereon stand the statues of Kings of Spain from Visigothic times downward. These were originally intended to adorn the roof of the royal residence. In the centre rises a magnificent bronze equestrian monument of Philip IV cast in 1640. A relief, on the plinth, represents that monarch conferring the Order of Santiago upon Velasquez. The square originated with Joseph Bonaparte, appointed King of Spain by Napoleon in succession to the Bourbons. Joseph employed much of his brief and stormy reign in improving Madrid by pulling down convents, monasteries and other old buildings in order to provide the cramped city with breathing space. The small garden, to south, is a favourite afternoon resort of children. Little girls skip, boys play touch and indulge in tugs-of-war, while their nurses sit on stone benches sewing, and flirting with soldiers. Gardeners, armed with long hoses, move about leisurely spraying the ground and the trees, whereat the big white blossoms of the magnolias breathe forth a fragrance like that of freshly brewed lemonade.

Near by, in the Calle Mayor, a tall brown stone column supports a figure of the Madonna. An angel, with outspread wings, stands at the foot. At either side are tablets inscribed with the names of the twenty-four victims of the attempt to assassinate the King on his wedding day. He and the Queen were passing the spot, on their return from church, when a bomb was hurled at them from a window of No. 88 opposite. Alighting from the royal coach they made their way to the Palace on foot.

A little further on is the Plaza de la Villa, a small oblong garden dominated by the statue of Admiral Alvaro de Bazan. The eastern side is overlooked by a curious yellow tower, the celebrated Torre de los Lojanes, to which Francis I was brought a prisoner in 1525. Facing it is the Town Hall, its lower storey of grey granite and its upper tinted a ripe raspberry colour, between corner turrets finished with tapering roofs of slate.

Beyond again lies the Plaza de la Constitucion better known by its former name of Plaza Mayor. It was at once the play ground and the place of execution of old Madrid. When, in 1623, the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I of

England, presented himself at the Spanish Court as a suitor for the hand of the Infanta Maria, the square was the scene of a magnificent tournament held in his honour. It was followed by bull fights, and the burning of heretics robed in black canvas, on which yellow flames and devils were painted. This garment was designed by the Inquisition and was styled a *San-benitò*. The most imposing *auto-da-fé* ever held in the Plaza Mayor occurred on June 30th, 1680. It began at 7 a.m., and continued for twelve hours, during the whole of which time Charles II, his Queen and the entire Court were present. No less than eighty victims were burnt at the stake.

The old square, the scene of these tragic events, looked peaceful enough on the afternoon of my visit. In place of flaming pyres are flower beds, trees and garden benches. From the centre rises the finest monument in Madrid, a bronze equestrian statue of Philip III cast in Florence, in 1613, from drawings by Pantoja de la Cruz. All around stretch arcades, the roofs of which provide spacious balconies for brown four storeyed houses identical in design, with a couple of exceptions. On the north side the *Panaderia* projects slightly. It derives its name from a bakery erected on the site in 1590, and burnt down in 1672. The present edifice is occupied by municipal offices. Frescoes, by Coello, adorn the façade, which further displays the name of Carlos II, a big bronze crown and the date 1674. The high slate roof slopes sharply between square corner towers finished with Gothic turrets and tapering spires.

A Frenchwoman, the Comtesse d'Aulnois, who visited Madrid in the sixteenth century, has left a graphic description of the appearance presented by the Plaza Mayor on festival occasions. After contrasting it with the corresponding *Place Royale*, in Paris, she stated how it was overlooked by a continuous series of balconies, amid which that of the King was the largest and most prominent, and was further distinguished by gilding and a canopy. Opposite to it were the balconies of the Ambassadors, the Councils of Castile and Aragon, the Inquisition, Italy, Flanders and the Indies. The War Office, Exchequer and Crusades were on the right of the sovereign. All were readily identified by their respective armorial bearings embroidered in gold upon richly coloured velvet hangings. The remaining balconies were apportioned among the town council, judges and nobles according to rank.

The expenses were defrayed from fines due to the King, or

else to the municipality, who hired the balconies from the owners. In addition the guests were given baskets filled with fruit, sweetmeats and iced drinks, while all ladies present received gloves, fans, silk stockings, pastils and garters.

Altogether some fifty thousand spectators found accommodation. Every place was crowded, the roofs included. Madame d'Aulnois ends by remarking: "The balconies with their gay hangings, the number of beautiful ladies, the magnificent court, the guards, and, in short the whole square present one of the most splendid sights I have ever beheld."

The Plaza de la Constitucion dates its present name from August 12th, 1812, the day on which Wellington entered the capital at the head of the allied British, Spanish and Portuguese armies. Joseph Bonaparte had fled leaving a small French garrison to hold the Retiro. The incoming troops were hailed with transports of joy as saviours, and the Constitution of Cadiz was proclaimed in the historic square.

Another quaint corner of Madrid is the Plaza de San Domingo, a triangle enclosed by five storeyed houses of uniform appearance. The garden in the centre marks the site of the ancient church, in which Pedro the Cruel was buried. His death occurred in 1362 as the result of a fratricidal quarrel with his illegitimate brother, Enrique of Trastramara. Curiously enough Pedro had been warned by a soothsayer that he would go forth to die from the Tower of Estrella. This troubled him little as he had never heard of any such place. His excesses divided the kingdom against him, and induced many to espouse the cause of Enrique. As a result Pedro found himself surrounded in the Castle of Montiel with no hope of succour. Reduced to extremity by shortage of water he decided to throw himself upon the mercy of de Guesclin. Accordingly he rode out of the Castle under cover of darkness, with an escort of three knights. Happening to look up, as he passed under the gateway, he read the inscription, Torre de Estrella. Proceeding to the Frenchman's tent he was speedily joined by Enrique. Instantly the two brothers closed in mortal combat, when a soldier, named Rocabarti, intervened by stabbing Pedro in the back.

The Prado is the finest thoroughfare in Madrid with its avenues of planes, acacias and other trees, enormous fountains and lofty Monumento del Dos de Mayo. Although more than a century has elapsed since the fatal 2nd of May, time has not effaced the tragic memory. In proof of this wreaths still adorn the cenotaph. The trouble began to brew on

April 29th, 1808, when news reached the capital that Fernando VII had been seized at Bayonne, where he had gone, at Napoleon's invitation, to attend a conference. The population were already indignant over the arrival of Murat at the head of a strong French force. The tidings that their King had been made a prisoner was followed by an order from Napoleon that Fernando's young brother, Don Francisco, a boy of sixteen, and their sister, the exiled Queen of Etruria, with her children, should be dispatched to Bayonne. May 2nd was fixed for their departure. Early in the morning an angry crowd assembled in front of the Palace gates. No sooner had the coach appeared with Don Francisco in charge of a French officer, than it was attacked by the mob. The prince was rescued and his escort killed. Thereafter the rioting became general. Murat's guard, and the battalion in charge of the Palace were overpowered, and a number slain before reinforcements arrived. French troops hurried in from the suburbs and the massacre began.

The Spanish garrison took no part in the fray. They held aloof awaiting orders from the Junta, with the exception of two gallant officers, Captains Daoiz and Velarde. These threw open the gates of the Artillery Park and served out muskets to their compatriots. When the French column appeared they turned their three available guns on them, and beat off two attacks. Ultimately Daoiz was bayoneted and Velarde shot.

The unequal struggle lasted for little more than four hours. Murat took terrible vengeance. All captured with arms in their possession, or found to have weapons in their houses were condemned to be shot. A grim series of public executions in the Prado closed the horrors of a day, during which the streets of Madrid literally ran with blood. The scene is depicted with powerful realism in an immense canvas by Goya preserved in the Museo, with other works by that strange artist.

Madrid is justly proud of its National Gallery, the Museo, a handsome brick and stone edifice of semi-classical design situated at the northern end of the Paseo del Prado. It was begun by Charles III in 1785, from drawings by Juan de Villanueva. The work was interrupted by the French invasion and finally completed under Fernando VII. In 1812 it was incorporated in the defences of the Retiro Fort garrisoned by some two thousand French under Lafon-Blaniac, Governor of La Mancha. This totally inadequate force was left to confront

Wellington, when Joseph evacuated the city. On the night of August 13th the Fort was attacked simultaneously from two points, namely the wall of the Park, near the Bull Ring, and that of the Botanical Gardens. Both assaults were completely successful with the result that Lafon-Blaniac surrendered on the following day. The garrison marched out with the honours of war, the officers retaining their arms, while the men's knapsacks were exempt from search. An immense amount of booty was found. The inner star fort, built about the old royal porcelain factory, was full of combustibles including nine hundred barrels of powder and several millions of cartridges. In addition there was an entire convoy of clothing intended for the Army of the South, and a vast stock of uniforms prepared by Joseph for his projected Juramentado regiments. Curiously enough the eagles of the 51st Line and the 12th Leger were also found in the Retiro. Small detachments of both regiments formed part of the garrison although the majority were with Soult in Andalusia. Wellington dispatched the eagles to the Prince Regent, by whose orders they were placed in Chelsea Hospital.

The Musco is entered from the north by a double flight of stone steps divided midway by a terrace decorated with a bronze statue of Goya, palette in hand. The great national painter is depicted as a stout jovial looking man in a small tie wig. The classical portal is flanked by two lofty Doric columns below three female forms, probably intended for the Graces. On entering, the Sala de Retratos lies on the right, its walls lined with Spanish royalties. One of the first portraits to attract attention is that of Maria Luisa, Gran Duquesa de Toscana, by Mengs (1725-1779).

The Queen Consort of Carlos IV is represented with a hatchet face, long thin nose, fishy blue eyes and a wide mouth with upturned corners and a protruding under lip. Her powdered hair is puffed at the sides, and drawn back from the forehead under a small blue and white jewelled cap. A second portrays her as stouter and less sour looking.

A full length painting of Charles V by Titian (1477-1576) depicts that celebrated monarch as a dyspeptic with a narrow, elongated countenance, small pointed black beard and prominent under lip, his hand resting on a big white hound. Near by hangs the likeness of his beautiful wife, Isabel of Portugal, dressed in a plum coloured gown. Her wealth of auburn hair is wound in plaits round her head, her pale face

is a delicate oval and her eyes large and pensive. Charles V was so enamoured of this picture that it accompanied him to San Yuste.

Another portrait, by Titian, is of Philip II. a sovereign of whom it is said that he never smiled excepting when he heard of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Titian represents him with short dark curly hair, heavily lidded eyes, a very full sensual mouth, great depth of chin and a slight beard trimmed to a peak. His daughter, Clara Eugenia Isabella bears a striking resemblance to him. Apparently he lavished such affection as he possessed upon her, in proof of which he bequeathed her the Netherlands.

Nothing could well be more lugubrious than the portrait of Don Carlos II. Fittingly enough he is clad in black. His long emaciated countenance frames a nose that extends to his upper lip. His fair lanky hair is parted in the middle and falls on a white collar. Altogether his entire person breathes an atmosphere of gloomy suspicion. Confronted with his likeness it is easy to understand how such a sovereign could remain for twelve hours, in the royal balcony of the Plaza Mayor, watching the burning of those found guilty by the Inquisition.

Amid the collection of Goya's paintings one of the most striking commemorates the Massacre of 2nd May, 1808. Gautier asserts that it was executed with a spoon for brush. Spectators are spared none of the sanguinary details. The effect is harrowing in the extreme. In all his works Goya displays a grim humour, while his portraits are more or less caricatures. To him men and women were ridiculous, frightful, wicked, but never banale. He is said to have painted with incredible rapidity, and to have kept his colours in tubs, whence he transferred them to his canvas with sponges, rags, brooms or any other convenient medium which happened to be within reach. Some of this frenzy is reflected in his pictures, nevertheless he was the last great Spanish artist of the old school. As such his works are an invaluable record of national customs and costumes, which had survived, practically unchanged, from the time of Cervantes down to the all shattering Napoleonic invasion.

The Museo is rich in paintings by Murillo, Velasquez—to whom an entire room is dedicated—Ribeira, El Greco, Titian, Raphael, Paola Veronese and many others including numerous examples of the Flemish and French schools. A number of artists are at work copying the old masters, among them a

fair sprinkling of women, and quite young girls, in their early teens.

The celebrated painting, by Titian, entitled *La Gloria* is of imposing dimensions. The canvas is flooded with yellow light. Enshrined in the radiant zone are the Three Persons of the Trinity—the Almighty, a venerable bearded figure, Christ, slender, spiritual and robed in blue, and the Holy Ghost represented by a dove. Below, in a semicircle, are ranged a number of figures. Charles V is depicted on his knees beside his wife, Isabel of Portugal. Their son, Philip II, and his first consort are also included among the elect. This picture is said to have been the last object upon which the Emperor Charles fixed his dying gaze. Afterwards it hung above his gilded tomb in the Escorial.

Immediately to east of the Museo stands the Church of San Jeronimo El Real. In it King Alfonso XIII was married to Princess Victoria Eugenia of Battenberg, in May 1906. Recent restorations make it appear a modern edifice, whereas it actually dates back to the commencement of the sixteenth century. For over three hundred years the Cortes assembled under its roof. Here, too, the heir to the throne, el Príncipe de Asturias, took the constitutional oath.

To south lie the Botanical Gardens laid out by Carlos III in 1774. A long iron work arcade runs under the high wall to east. Over it is trained every variety of vine cultivated in Spain. Although of special interest to viniculturists the unpractised eye can detect little, or no difference between the many specimens forming the green roof. Some fine elms line the principal avenue, which is decorated with the busts of those eminent botanists, Quer, Clemento, Lagasca and Cavamillas.

The Pantheon of Atocha is to south-east of the Prado and contains some splendid tombs. Surrounded by high stone walls the mausoleum is entered by handsome iron gates painted red and lavishly gilt. It was just 8.30 a.m. when I presented myself before them. They were locked. Far above my head dangled a bell which boasted about a foot of rope. The remainder was broken off. I shouted but to no purpose. In front of me, mute and unresponsive, stretched a long low building of grey and white stone, the corners marked by crimson domes, the gilding of which glittered in the hot morning sunshine. From the rear rose the isolated belfry of Atocha, tall, square and remote.

Some workmen, who were repairing the road, desisted from

their labour and came to my assistance. Joining their voices to mine we all shouted in unison. Apparently there was no waking the dead. One picked up a stone and hammered on the gate, the much dented condition of which suggested that it was frequently subjected to the same process. At last a passing pedestrian volunteered the information that the Pantheon did not open before 10 a.m., and suggested that I should spend the intervening time at the State Carpet Factory, close by.

Nothing could be less like one's preconceived ideas of a factory than the quiet old world building, in which I speedily found myself. The square entrance hall was hung with oil paintings and tapestries. Behind was a long whitewashed room, with large windows opening on to a green tree planted patio. Down one side were ranged great looms. To the left of each a man was at work assisted by some half dozen girls and boys. Old women were busy carding wool. Two other apartments were chiefly devoted to tapestries, reproductions of those in the Royal Palace, or of paintings by Raphael, Goya and other great masters. All were conspicuous for vivid colouring and the delicate fidelity of the flesh tints. The majority introduced a great number of figures. Skilled men workers receive ten pesetas a day. The Real Fabrica de Tapices was founded in 1721 by Philip V, who brought artisans from the famous Toledo factory for the purpose.

Shortly after 10 o'clock I finally succeeded in gaining admittance to the Pantheon, its doorway surmounted by sculptured crowns and escutcheons. The interior consists of arcades which run round four sides of a tree planted patio, from the centre of which soars a big white marble column decorated with green enamel and gold, and the inscription "*Pro Patria mortuis honor et pax.*"

To right of the entrance sleeps the great Prim. A bronze effigy of him in uniform reposes upon a coffin of silver and gold, adorned with the battle scenes in which he commanded in Mexico, the Crimea, at Cadiz and in Africa. On one side is depicted his triumphant entry into Madrid after his successful campaign in Morocco. The other shows his assassination in the Calle del Turco, near the Bank of Spain.

To left of the door a huge marble sarcophagus covers the remains of Sagasta, obit 1902. He is represented in repose with a crucifix on his breast, while allegorical figures guard the head and foot. The monument is by Benlliure. Equally

superb is the tomb of Canovas, in the south gallery, who was assassinated in 1897.

The northern cloister contains the grave of the Duke of Bailen, obit 1852, a General who gained distinction in the war against the French. Beside him lies Palafox y Melzi, the first Duke of Zaragoza, which city he so heroically defended at such a fearful cost. Probably the most remarkable monument is that to President Canalejas assassinated in 1912. The sculptor portrays the dead body of the statesman draped in a sheet, being borne by three men down into the sepulchre, the door of which is open while above it stands the Saviour.

The fashionable world of Madrid is to be seen out driving every summer evening between sunset and dark. All who can afford to do so take their airing on wheels. A few patronise motor cars. The majority, however, prefer smart broughams. The coachmen and footmen present an immaculate appearance in sombre livery, silk hats and coçades. One of the most stylish equipages of the kind was drawn by a pair of white mules. The occupants were two distinguished looking ladies in unrelieved black.

Despite its many splendid buildings, art treasures and wealth of interest Madrid repels rather than attracts. An old proverb tersely expresses the lack of charm exercised by the Spanish capital :

" Those who wish for it do not know it.
Those who know it do not wish for it."

In summer it is intensely hot. Moreover something in the atmosphere inspires a perpetual thirst, which is not to be assuaged by the most seductive of bebidas, nor the coldest limon helado. A time honoured couplet sums up its climate in uncompromising fashion :

" The air of Madrid is so keen and subtle
That 'twill kill a man yet not snuff a candle."

CHAPTER XV

TOLEDO

THE first view of Toledo is grimly impressive. Elevated in mid air, between the glare of the hot yellow plain, and the dazzling blue of a vast cloudless sky, the ancient city seems as completely isolated as an island in mid ocean. The effect is fantastical. From the train window it suggests a desert mirage, a vision from the past, an illusory reflection from Time's mirror.

The old Visigothic capital dominates the entire landscape from its commanding position on an irregular rocky eminence washed by the winding Tagus, the fabled river of gold. Singularly clear and dry the atmosphere causes every line of the encircling battlements, towers, gateways and piled up houses to stand out sharply defined as in an etching. There is no blur, no confusion of details and no shadow. High above all frowns the square brown face of the Alcazar, a prison-like edifice, its angular rigidity emphasised by projecting corner turrets capped by pointed Gothic roofs.

From a distance Toledo probably looks much the same to-day as it did when Alfonso VI entered it, at the head of his victorious army, on May 25th, 1085. The Cid rode close behind him followed by a glittering array of knights in armour. Among them were nobles from France, Italy and Germany, for in the eyes of Christian Europe every fresh effort to drive the Moors out of Spain was invested with the sacred character of a crusade.

The capture of Toledo was destined to influence the course of future events in a manner that none alive at the time could possibly have foreseen. The Castilian monarch rewarded the foreigners, who had rallied to his standard, with more than royal prodigality. Prominent among them were the younger brother, and the cousin of the Duke of Burgundy. To the latter, Raymond, Count of Amaous, Alfonso gave the hand of Urraca, his only legitimate daughter, and the governorship of Galicia. The former, Henry of Burgundy, received the King's natural daughter, Teresa, as wife, with certain

lands on the western seaboard of the peninsula, as her dowry. These were converted into a separate county under the name of Portugal, and recognised as an independent kingdom by Pope Alexander III in 1179, with Alfonso Henriquez, Teresa's son, as first monarch.

The early morning train from Madrid reached Toledo at 10 a.m. The ensuing scramble for seats in the bus allowed little time for admiring the beauties of the station, a new red brick building, the interior brilliantly decorated in the Moorish style of the Alhambra, at Granada. Soon the heavily laden bus was rattling over the far famed Puente de Alcantara, an ancient Arab bridge of two arches, one narrow, the other wide. The approach is guarded by a gate, and the further end by massive sexagonal towers pierced by an arched passage adorned with crowns, and the customary wealth of armorial bearings. Thereafter the straining mules began the steep zigzag ascent to the Puerta del Sol.

The old Gate of the Sun is a massive structure of tawny coloured stone traversed by a tunnel-like passage paved with irregular cobblestones, that prove very painful to the feet. A curious effect is achieved by four arches of varying design and dimensions. These almost suggest a trick of perspective. The first and loftiest is heart shaped, the second round, and the third pointed. The façade displays a circular medallion bearing a relief of the Annunciation, and two quaint faces representing the sun and the moon. In mediæval times the Puerta del Sol was enlivened by a grim frieze composed of the heads of malefactors. An old chronicler extols the righteous impartiality of San Fernando, whose judgments dealt equally severely with the highly placed and the humble. In proof of this the ancient scribe relates how once, as the monarch emerged from the Gate of the Sun, he was waylaid by two young and comely women. They flung themselves down before him, and implored justice upon their betrayer, who was none other than Fernandez Gonzalo, the dread Alcalde of the city. The King was so moved by their tears that, within an hour, the ladies had the satisfaction of seeing the head of their faithless lover staring at them with sightless eyes from the arch of the portal. From this it would appear that San Fernando entertained a less high opinion of woman's ability to defend her virtue than was held by Sancho Panza, the doughty Squire of Don Quixote.

The narrow cobble paved road zigzags steeply up to the ancient Church of Santo Cristo de la Luz. The foundations

are ascribed to the Visigothic King, Athanagild, in the sixth century, at which date a much venerated Crucifix hung before the door. Tradition describes how two Jews impiously pierced the figure with a lance, whereupon, to their great consternation, blood gushed forth. An indignant Christian mob tore them in pieces. At this some other Hebrews smeared poison on the feet of the image. As a woman approached to kiss them the right foot was withdrawn and the plot discovered. When the Moors stormed the city the priests of the Church hid the miraculous crucifix in a recess in the wall, with a lighted lamp in front of it, and bricked both up.

The precaution was well inspired. The infidels proceeded to turn the Church into the Mosque of Bib-el-Mardom, a portion of which still stands guarded by a shabby wooden door. This opens, after considerable delay, in response to a bell jerked by means of a frayed end of rope. The interior is lined with triple rows of horseshoe arches liberally coated with whitewash, which spring from rounded columns conspicuous for the variety and elaboration of the sculptured capitals. The sides are open, and the vaulted roof is of involved design. Four steps lead up to the sanctuary, where traces of brilliant frescoes still show on the walls and ceiling.

Upon his triumphal entry into the city Alfonso VI and his knights rode past the little mosque. Instantly the Cid's white charger, the famous Babieca, sank on its knees, and could not be induced to rise. Like Balaam's ass it had seen a vision. The age was one of faith. Search was made. Soon the light was found burning before the miraculous crucifix in the wall, where both had been placed by pious hands nearly four centuries earlier. The King testified his appreciation of the marvel by hanging his shield, emblazoned with a white cross on a crimson ground, from the central arch.

To left of the Church a pleasant garden enlivens the city ramparts. In passing a fruit laden tree, near an old stone well head, the caretaker plucked a handful of nectarines and presented them to me. Next he led the way up well worn steps to the top of the Puerta del Sol, where our exertions were doubly rewarded by a fresh breeze and a splendid panorama. Green vega, red hills rent by chasms and dotted with olive trees, and romantic ruins spread out before the ancient keep under a sky of cloudless blue. On the further side of the deep banked Tagus rose the Castle of San Servando founded as a Benedictine Monastery by Alfonso VI and almost destroyed, in the latter part of the eleventh century, by the invading

Almoravides under their fierce leader, Yusuf ben Tashfin. Thereafter it was bestowed upon the Knights Templars.

Below the Gate of the Sun lay a large brown building with octagonal towers, the celebrated Hospital of St. John the Baptist built in the sixteenth century. About it clustered the tiled roofs and whitewashed walls of its humbler neighbours. Suddenly, as I looked, the drowsy hush was shattered by the clash of bells from the dark prison-like building of the Carmelite Convent on the hillside above.

The heart of Toledo centres in the Plaza de la Constitucion, a large irregular space paved with cobblestones and enclosed by five storeyed houses. The encircling pavement consists of a pillared arcade, which runs in front of shops and cafés. The centre of the Plaza de Zocodover, to give the quadrangle its old name, is shadeless but for a few young acacia trees. In addition it boasts some wooden benches. Formerly it was the scene of autos-da-fé. An extraordinary test of faith was held under Alfonso VI to decide the respective merits of the Gothic, and Roman Catholic rituals. The Christians of Toledo adhered to the former, whereas the Queen Consort, a Frenchwoman, preferred the latter and was supported by her compatriot, Bishop Bernard. A trial by arms was decided upon. Accordingly two champions were selected and met in mortal combat. The result was a triumph for the Mozarabic cause. This satisfied neither the Queen, nor yet the French bishop. An immense pile of faggots was heaped in the Plaza de Zocodover. On the top were placed the two books of prayer. Accounts differ as to what exactly happened. Some authorities claim that a wind from Heaven caught up the Roman Catholic missal and blew it to safety. All, however, are agreed that, when the flames died down, the Mozarabic tome was found unscorched in the ashes. Despite these significant omens the ultimate verdict justified the time-honoured axiom: "*Ce que femme veut Dieu veut.*" The King decreed that Mass should be celebrated according to the Roman Catholic ritual. The Mozarabic form was restricted to a couple of churches, which the Christians had been allowed to retain under Moorish dominion.

The little tables on the pavement outside the encircling cafés are enlivened by the presence of Infantry cadets, conspicuous in light grey uniforms, their flat round white caps banded with scarlet and gold, above a black peak surmounted by crossed muskets. Two rows of gilt buttons gleam on the double breasted tunic, which fastens up to the throat and

finishes with a high closely fitting collar. No belt is worn. A rapier hangs at the left side from a narrow cloth strap.

Toledo owes much of its brightness to the cadets. They are encountered everywhere. All day, and far into the night, they are to be seen in streets and restaurants. I imagined that they constituted the greater portion of the population until, to my surprise, I learnt that there were only about a thousand of them all told.

From the Plaza de la Constitucion it is a short steep climb to the Alcazar, a forbidding edifice, the gloomy magnificence of which weighs upon the spirits. The long straight façade looks north across a paved square levelled by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1502. It is pierced by three rows of windows and a narrow arched door decorated with statues and armorial bearings. Within lies a large stone paved court enclosed by two tiers of arcades supported by Corinthian pillars, above each of which the double headed eagle of Austria spreads its wings. In the centre a pedestal supports a statue of the Emperor Charles in armour.

Built on the highest ground in Toledo the Alcazar covers the site of the Roman citadel, wherein Saint Leocadia suffered martyrdom. Under the Moors it was regarded as an impregnable stronghold. After its capture, by Alfonso VI, it constituted the royal residence. The Cid lived in it as first Christian Alcalde of the city. In it the unhappy Blanche of Bourbon was imprisoned by her ferocious husband, Pedro the Cruel. Here, too, Henry the Impotent was besieged by the partisans of his sister, Isabella, who was bent upon wresting the inheritance from her niece Juana, the unfortunate heiress to the throne known to history by the scandalous nickname of la Beltraneja. It was the birthplace of Isabella's daughter, the mad Queen Juanita, the first sovereign to unite, in her own person, the many crowns of Castile and Aragon. There are those who trace a connection between her insanity and the mysterious workings of the law of retribution.

Various Spanish sovereigns added to, and embellished the Moorish citadel. Charles V gratified his curious whim for building one edifice upon another, by erecting his own palace thereon. Remains of the earlier edifice still show with strange effect on the eastern side, where the old battlements may be traced. Finally the Alcazar was converted into a Military Academy for infantry officers, in 1882.

On presenting my card I was kindly received by one of the Professors, Capitan Miguel Muzquiz, who obtained permission

for me to see the Museum housed on the east side of the central patio. The collection of war trophies is a most interesting one and admirably arranged. I was shown a number of letters written in Spanish, and signed "Wellington, Duque de Ciudad Roderigo," a title that commemorates the great battle fought on the Portuguese frontier, in 1809. The walls are crowded with portraits of military heroes. Regimental colours hang in rows from the ceiling. Dummies parade in the various styles of infantry uniform dating from the iron age of armour. Among the many decorations that of San Fernando was pointed out to me as equivalent to the Victoria Cross. The accompanying ribbon is scarlet edged with gold.

In answer to my question Capitan Muzquiz informed me that cadets are admitted between the ages of fifteen and twenty. The course of study embraces chemistry and general subjects, in addition to those of purely military importance. At present promotion from the ranks does not exist, but is under consideration. On taking leave of him I ran into a party of American ladies, school teachers from New York State. We had travelled from Madrid in the same compartment. They were most anxious to see the Alcazar. One of them had come armed with a letter to a cadet, which she committed to a messenger. Pending an answer we were shown into the refectory, an immense dining room lined with long tables spread with quite the dirtiest white cloths I had ever seen. A group of waitresses gathered round us, wrinkled and toothless hags but cheerful withal. The youngest must have been sixty at the very least. The appearance of these ancient houis suggested that the military authorities were determined to protect their charges from any possibility of temptation from the charms of the fair sex.

At sight of my camera the old women clapped their hands and literally danced for joy. One of them hastily brought me a brimming tumbler filled with a red concoction that tasted like claret cup. Then they begged to have their photo taken. Hardly was this accomplished than the cadet arrived, very red in the face and painfully shy. He was full of regrets. The Alcazar could only be visited on Sunday. If the ladies would return then, he would be happy to show them over. What of the Museum, I hazarded. Ah! that was more impossible still. With this he shook hands solemnly all round and we took our departure. The interview had occupied just three minutes, and we had waited three-quarters of an hour.

Had the Cathedral been built on the lofty site occupied by



the Alcázar the effect would have been indescribably grand, solemn and beautiful. Instead it is tucked away in a declivity behind the grim palace of warrior kings, where, in place of being looked at, it has to be looked for amid a maze of narrow cobble paved streets hemmed in by high houses, with iron barred lower casements, and balconies bright with flowers. Some of the oldest have the outer walls decorated with frescoes in shades of dark brown on a light ground. Many have the doors open. The occupants can be seen at work inside—cobblers, seamstresses, dressmakers, sculptors, tailors and so on.

Finally I found myself in the Calle del Arco del Palacio Arzobispo, so called from the arched overhead gallery which connects the Cathedral with the Palace of the Archbishop, a great pink four storeyed building, its size in keeping with the dignity of the Primate of Spain. My nostrils were pleasantly assailed by an all pervading fragrance of coffee. Looking about for an explanation I saw a man standing in front of a flaming brazier. He was briskly turning a handle attached to a large hollow spherical iron receptacle, which revolved rapidly over the wood fire, and emitted a delightful odour of roasting coffee berries. Near him a youth in a loose blue shirt was peddling jars of water. It only needed a woman milking a goat to complete the picture.

The Archbishop's windows look across at the unresponsive stone walls of the cloisters built in the fifteenth century on the site of the Jewish bazaar. They are entered by the Puerta del Molletes, or Door of the Rolls, which hospitable portal owes its name to the bread distributed therefrom. Next to it soars the big brown tower marking the north-west corner of the façade. For the greater part of its height it is a massive square built of cut stone decorated with blue and white tiling. From the summit shoots a slender octagonal turret surrounded by Gothic pinnacles. It, in turn, supports a grey slate steeple banded with triple crowns in compliment, probably, to Ferdinand and Isabella, under whom the kingdoms of Aragon, Leon and Castile were united. The tower, at the opposite corner, was never finished hence its stunted look. An exotic touch is the Saracenic dome added to it by J. M. Theotocopuli, son of the celebrated El Greco.

The façade displays a superb central door. The deep pointed Gothic arch is lined with row upon row of carved saints set between two similar portals on a lesser scale, and looks across the tree planted Plaza de Ayuntamiento to the

Town Hall built during the reign of the Catholic Sovereigns, a dignified two storeyed building of brown stone flanked by square towers with tapering slate roofs and pinnacles. On the walls of the grand staircase some lines by Gomez Manrique are emblazoned in letters of gold upon blue. The fifteenth century Castilian poet reminds the municipality of their duty in terms that may well inspire their successors in office four hundred years later :

“ Good gentlemen, with high forbears,
Who govern Toledo city,
As you ascend these civic stairs
Abandon all nepotic cares,
Fear, greed and undue pity.
Think only of the States’ behoof,
Not of the gain that lureth ;
Since you’re the pillars of the roof
Which God provides, be yours the proof
That honour still endureth.”

The inhabitants of Toledo entertained a lofty conception of their civic obligations, hence the formation of the *Sant Hermandad*, or Holy Brotherhood, composed of citizens who, for three centuries, policed Castile and endeavoured to reduce to order a turbulent land and an unruly age. Humorous reference to the activities of the Company is made in “ *Don Quixote*.”

The vast and beautiful Cathedral is extraordinarily rich in rare, and precious objects wrought in the days when religion was a vital force, and art an inspiration from above, not a commercial pursuit. It stands on the site of an early Visigothic Church dedicated to the Virgin by King Recared as long ago as April 12th, 587. The Arabs turned it into a mosque, the retention of which constituted one of the chief clauses in the capitulation treaty signed by Alfonso VI. Despite this it was taken from them within a year by Queen Constance during the King’s absence. San Fernando demolished the ancient fane. On August 11th, 1227, he laid the foundation stone of the present Cathedral, which took two hundred and sixty-six years to build, and which disputes with Burgos, its senior by six years, the claim to be considered the finest Gothic edifice in Spain.

I entered from the north by the *Puerta del Reloj*, a pointed Gothic arch lined with an infinity of small sculptured figures, to find myself in the lofty transept. The interior was strangely dim and cool after the hot yellow glare of the July

afternoon, but it was not restful. Quite the reverse. Vast though it was it seemed to swarm with sightseers, who, dwarfed by the mighty grandeur of the pile, appeared insignificant as ants, and their activities as futile.

Swept forward by the crowd, as on the crest of a wave, I was propelled towards the high altar, a comparatively plain table whereon stood an immense gold crucifix and six great candlesticks of the same precious metal. The superb retablo rises to the roof in tier upon tier of gorgeously coloured and gilt figures carved in larchwood from designs approved by Cardinal Ximenes. To left, high up in the wall, reposes the white marble effigy of Cardinal Mendoza, whose influence over Ferdinand and Isabella earned for him the nickname of Tertius Rex. He was literally the power behind the throne. The Queen owed much to him and testified her gratitude in the lavish magnificence of his sepulchre. Other sarcophagi rest in elaborately decorated shrines to left and right of the altar. They are the tombs of Sancho III and Sancho IV and of Alfonso VII and the Infante Pedro de Aguilar, son of Alfonso IX.

A superb reja, or screen of bronze surmounted by an immense Calvary, divides the Capilla Mayor from the transept. The remaining three sides of the sanctuary are enclosed by walls, the exterior crowded with figures, and intricate ornamentation in white marble and gilding until the eye is sated with exquisite detail and grows weary. The official cicerone points out a statue, on the left, as that of Martin Alhagam, the mysterious shepherd-guide to whom Alfonso VIII owed the great victory of Las Navas de Tolosa. Another, on the right, is that of the Alfaque Abu Walid, the magnanimous Muhammadan who, when Alfonso VI was about to vent his wrath upon Bishop Bernard for confiscating the Moorish mosque in violation of the treaty, intervened on the prelate's behalf and secured his pardon.

Special interest attaches to the handsome gilt pulpits in that they are wrought from the bronze tombs prepared for himself and his wife by Alvaro de Luna, Master of Santiago and Grand Constable of Castile. A man of dominant personality de Luna won the royal favour by his skill in singing, dancing and knightly exercises. Thereafter he entirely dominated that weak monarch John II, reduced the power of the Cortes to a shadow, and virtually ruled the realm as he pleased from 1420 until 1453. He maintained almost regal state while, at the same time, his cupidity was insatiable. His

interference in the King's domestic affairs brought about his downfall. Having intrigued to bring about a marriage between John II and Isabel of Portugal he met his match in the new Queen, with the result that he was disgraced and publicly executed, at Valladolid.

The Coro faces the Capilla Mayor across the transept, whence it is shut off by a splendid screen formerly heavily plated with silver and gilt. No language could express the beauty and elaboration of the choir stalls. Of carved walnut wood the lower row are by Rodriguez and are historically important as depicting scenes from the conquest of Granada. The upper are the work of two noted artists, Burruguete, a Spaniard, and Philip Vigarni and are separated by jasper columns, the capitals being of marble. The canopy over the Primate's throne is particularly splendid. The outer walls of the choir are of white marble decorated with reliefs from the Old Testament. Some are very quaint, notably one of Noah's Ark where the dove, an olive branch in its beak, perches on the shelving roof, and the faces of men and animals peer out of the twelve windows. Above these scriptural scenes rise a succession of pointed shrines divided by round pillars of coloured marble, remarkable for the intricacy of the capitals. The *trascoro* displays three altars protected by gilt iron gates, and hung with votive offerings in the form of glass eyes, waxen ears, noses, hands, etc. To north-west of it a magnificent shrine stands isolated amid the black and white squares of the marble pavement. From it a gilt spire shoots up to the lofty vaulted roof. The altar is of marble and silver gilt surmounted by a relief of Our Lady who, on this very spot, made herself manifest to St. Ildefonso in the seventh century and presented him with a chasuble.

A door at the back of this shrine leads through into the spacious cloisters chiefly remarkable for some fine frescoes.

The curious Mozarabic chapel, where Mass is said every morning according to the ancient Gothic ritual, stands in the south-west angle of the Cathedral immediately to right of the great Puerta del Perdon. It is only open during service. At other times it is kept locked so that I had, perforce, to content myself with a view of its iron barred portal, bright colours, gilding and rounded arch.

The southern end of the transept terminates at the Puerta de los Leones, a splendidly carved doorway surmounted by an organ. It takes its name from the six lions carved on the white marble posts of its outer gate. To left of the opposite

portal, the Puerta del Reloj, the Chapel of the Virgin contains a quaint and much revered statue. Only the small dark face is visible below a towering jewelled crown. The remainder is smothered with outstanding robes of gold, silver and glittering gems. It rests on an incredibly rich altar of five tiers. The four lowest are of wrought silver and the topmost of gold. Near by is the Sacristia. At its further end hangs El Greco's masterpiece, a large canvas representing Christ being stripped of his raiment at Calvary. The rich red of the Saviour's robe stands out from the bluish-green of the other figures. With the exception of this, his favourite phosphorescent colouring, the artist exhibits none of his usual freakish eccentricity.

Immediately behind the High Altar lies the mortuary chapel of Santiago constructed by Alvaro de Luna, the all powerful favourite of John II. The splendid marble tombs of himself and his wife occupy the centre. Other members of his family are ranged in niches in the walls. To north of his resting place a passage runs through to the chapel of the Reyes Nuevos, wherein are interred the line of Trastamara sovereigns descended from Henry II, the illegitimate brother of Pedro the Cruel. To south is the Sala Capitular, its walls lined with portraits of the Cardinals of Toledo, hung in two serried rows one above the other. On glancing down the long lines of faces the spectator, who has studied physiognomy, is moved to hope that the majority are caricatures.

As to the hoarded wealth of Church ornaments, jewels, vestments and banners the bare catalogue would fill a volume. Confronted by the almost unbelievable riches of the Cathedral it is difficult to understand how it could possibly have been looted by French troops as recently as 1808.

Among the crowd of sightseers a thin little man, with a straggling ginger coloured beard, was rendered conspicuous by a white topee. Going up to him I inquired if he were from the East? He replied that he was from Chicago, to which city he was returning after a "round the world" trip. He had bought his sun helmet in Japan, as he had been told that he would need one in Ceylon, and had worn it ever since.

As I left the Cathedral the music of the organ, and the sonorous voices of priests and choir echoed solemnly amid the shadowy stone pillars. Evening service was in progress, stately, beautiful and mysterious as in the days when Kings and knights in armour knelt upon the black and white squares of the marble pavement. Now there was no congregation. The sightseers hurried away to catch the evening train to

Madrid, and the Kings and knights lay rigid and unresponsive, petrified white figures stretched out on their tombs; hard couches even for warriors.

On the following morning I started early to work off some of the show places enumerated on my really formidable list. It was disappointing to learn that none opened before 9.30. At this I strolled across the Plaza de la Constitucion, and down the steps of the horseshoe arch known as la Sangre de Cristo, to the cobble paved Calle de Cervantes, so called from the fact that the celebrated author of "Don Quixote" resided in a small corner house now styled the Posada de la Sangre. In it he wrote "La Ilustre Fregona." The ancient inn is built about four sides of a small cobble paved patio filled with decrepid wagons and buses, and smelling strongly of stables. The pillars of the encircling wooden galleries still retain traces of bright colour decoration, while a signboard, over an inner door, states, in big red letters, "Se Serven Comidas de Con-cargo" (Meals served to order).

Near by is the fifteenth century hospital of Santa Cruz begun by the great Cardinal Mendoza in 1494, as a home for foundlings. After his death, which occurred in the following year, the work was completed by Queen Isabella, to whom he had bequeathed 75,000 ducats for the purpose. It stands on the site assigned to the palace of the legendary King Galafre. The beautiful doorway faces south, and is decorated with a wealth of reliefs notably the Adoration of the Cross by Cardinal Mendoza and the Saints Peter, Paul and Helena. The main building is of stone lighted by high set windows barred with iron. Of cruciform shape the chapel is surmounted by an upper storey of similar design, except that it is pierced by a central opening over which soars a very fine stone lantern distinguished by the excellence of its ornamentation.

Five ways unite in the irregular Plaza de San Salvador overlooked by an old pink church, its outer wall marked by an inscribed tablet stating that in it the dramatist de Royas Zurillo was baptised on October 27th, 1607. A few paces further on is the Taller de Moro, one of the most perfect specimens of Moorish architecture in the city. It is entered through a large oblong courtyard, the east side of which is flanked by a lofty hall of truly noble proportions under a hull shaped roof of age darkened timber, that rises above a stucco frieze of characteristic star pattern. The plaster was not moulded, as is sometimes supposed, but treated as stone and cut. The southern end opens into a small domed apartment,

the ceiling and walls resplendent with arabesque designs. Fretwork screens fill the high set windows. What was once the residence of a Moorish notability is now a baker's shop.

Claim is made that the site is that of the ghastly massacre popularly known as the Noche Toledana, which occurred in 801. At that date Spanish Moslems were divided in their allegiance, some siding with the Ommayad ruler of Cordova, Abd-ar-Rahman, and others with the Abbasside Caliph of Damascus. Toledo favoured the latter and was punished accordingly. Abd-ar-Rahman's son arrived before the gates with a large force. The nobles invited him to enter whereupon he bade them to a feast. As each guest entered, his head was struck off.

Much of one side of the Plaza del Conde is taken up by a gloomy prison-like edifice of irregular stone. The upper portion is of brick, broken by a few small window openings. Three coats of arms surmount the square portal, which admits to a cramped hall, whence stairs lead to a large courtyard looked down upon by an upper gallery, and doors and windows of Moorish design. Now known as the Academia Frias, a military school, it was the Palace of the Counts of Fuensalida. Charles V stayed in it in 1537. The attendant, who showed me round, pointed to a small room on the topmost floor, as that in which the Emperor's beautiful wife, Isabella of Portugal, breathed her last.

A short walk brought me to the famous Jewish synagogue forcibly converted to Christianity by San Vicente Ferrer in the fifteenth century, under the name of Santa Maria Blanca. Guarded by high garden walls of flat bricks, crudely patched with stone and mortar, the court is a wilderness of weed shaded by a few melancholy acacias, and a solitary and ancient fig tree. Eagerly I looked for the mangrove described by Gautier, as all the mangroves I had ever seen grew in water. There was no trace of it. Can it be that the gifted French writer failed to recognise the venerable tree, which first set the fashion in dress, and so mistook it for a mangrove? On the east side rose a dilapidated building, neglected, weather-worn and morose. Four very small windows looked furtively from behind iron bars deeply sunk in the massive masonry of the pointed façade, if so dignified an architectural term may be applied to what appeared a shabby back wall. A female caretaker unlocked the door. Another moment and I stood in an enchanted hall of fantastical horseshoe arches branching from octagonal pillars, with elaborately carved capitals con-

verted, by the magic of the whitewasher's brush, into the gleaming semblance of marble. A band of brilliantly coloured tiles girdled the base of each eight sided column with jewel-like effect.

Glazed red bricks and small blue and white tiles paved the floor. Overhead glittered a richly gilded dome. Three rainbow arches stretched across the east end in front of as many recesses roofed with gigantic scallop shells. The one in the centre still retains a broken altar surmounted by a painted and gilt retablo of carved wood depicting the Flight into Egypt and other scriptural scenes. Above the entrance an engraved tablet sets forth the subsequent history of the one time synagogue. Sanctified as the Church of Santa Maria Blanca, by San Vicente Ferrer, in 1405, Cardinal Silices founded a monastery in connection with it in 1500. This was reduced to a hermitage in 1600. From 1791 to 1798 it served as barracks. Ultimately the old church was declared a national monument.

The synagogue is generally ascribed to the reign of Alfonso X in the thirteenth century. The scholar King favoured the Jews, and so permitted them to erect a beautiful house of worship in the heart of their particular quarter. Long before that they were a power in Toledo, in fact some authorities incline to the belief that they were the actual founders of the city. At any rate they appear to have been established in the Iberian peninsula prior to the Christian era, hence the claim of the Spanish Jews that their particular tribe voted against the crucifixion. They suffered persecution under the Visigoths but were, on the whole, well treated by the Muhammadans, who appreciated their skill as physicians and astrologers. Their enemies declared them to be proficient in the Black Art. Michael Scott, the renowned wizard, is said to have been a pupil of Andreas, a noted Jew of Toledo accused of translating a number of magic works from Arabic.

After leaving Santa Maria la Blanca, the road proceeds northward to the School of Art established in 1882 in the mediæval Franciscan monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, a curious brick edifice, its roof edged with brilliantly coloured porcelain figures. Just beyond is the splendid church built by Ferdinand and Isabella as a thankoffering for their victory over Alfonso, the African, King of Portugal, who had espoused the cause of la Beltraneja, the rightful Queen of Castile dispossessed by her aunt. The two armies met on a wide plain to east of the city of Toro, on March 1st, 1476. Night, and a deluge of rain put an end to the battle, the issue of which

was undecided until Zamora surrendered eighteen days later. Subsequently Alfonso withdrew to Portugal taking la Beltraneja with him.

Ferdinand and Isabella claimed a sweeping victory. Triumphant processions were held, the captured standard of Alfonso V was laid on the tomb of John I in reparation of the defeat suffered ninety-one years earlier at Aljubarrota, and the church and monastery of San Juan de los Reyes were founded. The Catholic Monarchs announced their intention of being buried therein.

The church is built of granite blocks sunburnt and weather stained a mellow shade of brown. It looks north on to a wide open terrace overhanging the Tagus. The door is decorated with fine carving and is flanked by two pairs of Corinthian pillars, whence taper Gothic pinnacles. To left and right, high on the fortress like walls, hang a number of iron chains. These are none other than the fetters struck from the limbs of Christian captives held for ransom, by the Moors, in the gloomy dungeons of Ronda, whence they were rescued by the Catholic Sovereigns in May, 1485.

The interior is long, narrow and very lofty. The twittering of innumerable birds echoes sweetly through the empty building, the floor of which is thickly covered with their traces. The high altar, at the east end, is surmounted by a domed marble tabernacle modelled on the design of a Muhammadan kiosk. Above it rises the usual brilliantly coloured and gilt retable. The walls are covered with immense carved stone crowns above the respective arms of Ferdinand and Isabella : his a yoke and hers a bundle of arrows. Further decoration takes the form of sculptured eagles, lions and graven saints in Gothic shrines. Nothing could be more elaborate. The choir occupies the west end, but is completely concealed by a mass of scaffolding.

Cloisters lie behind the church, and are equally loaded with ornament. The walls are covered with carved saints in niches. Some still glow with colour and gleam with gold. The windows are beautifully framed in scrolls of fruit, foliage and small figures. On the northern side a square fragment of brilliantly hued tiling is reputed to be from the Palace of Rodrigo, the last Visigothic King. The garden, in the middle, is a neglected tangle of tall pampas grass and trees. Above the cloisters is a second gallery conspicuous for a carved, painted and gilt wooden ceiling of much excellence.

The terrace, in front of the Church, commands a wide flung

view. Far below, the Tagus winds under the five arches of San Martin's bridge fortified by square towers at either end. Originally constructed by Alfonso X it was partially wrecked by the adherents of Pedro the Cruel on the approach of Henry of Trastamara. A score of years later it was restored by Cardinal Tenorio. Tradition avers that, on the eve of the day fixed for the formal opening of the bridge, the architect confided to his wife that, as soon as the scaffolding was removed, the masonry would collapse. She made no comment but, under cover of darkness, set fire to the supports and so saved her husband's reputation and, probably, his life. Beyond stretch tawny hills sparingly patched with fields, and dotted with olive trees. At their feet the verdant vega spreads like a bright green carpet under the matchless azure of the sky.

The road slopes down to the old Puerta del Cambron, a massive gatehouse set in the city walls. Its upper storeys are inhabited, and its river face emblazoned with coats of arms flanked by two crowned figures holding iron swords with the blades pointing upward. To right, a little higher on the hill, rise lofty embattlemented walls and towers, with fretted window screens, but the palace, which they guarded, has eluded their vigilance and completely disappeared. Inside is a flower garden and a small edifice, where men were at work decorating glazed pottery. According to them their factory was the Palace of la Cava, the unhappy lady whose downfall caused that of Spain. Her name, as distinct from the opprobrious epithet ever since applied to her, was Florinda. She was the daughter of Count Julian, Military Governor of Spanish Africa. Her mother was a sister of King Witiza. When that monarch was deposed, and the youthful Rodrigo elected to the throne, the nobility hastened to ingratiate themselves with the new sovereign. Count Julian did likewise. The more convincingly to prove his loyalty he placed his young and beautiful daughter, the auburn haired Florinda, among the maids of honour attendant upon the Queen, herself a noted beauty of whom the King was deeply enamoured.

The tale runs that one hot summer's day as the Queen's maidens were bathing, some say in the river, others in a marble tank in a jasmine hung court of the palace, Rodrigo looked forth and saw Florinda's arm. From that moment he was possessed of a guilty passion, which he speedily made known to the girl who sought, in vain, to repel his advances. Indignant at the "bright dishonour of a King's love" Florinda secretly despatched a page to her father, with a letter telling

him the story. Count Julian's anger was nothing to that of his wife. Spurred on by her he invoked the aid of the Arabs to invade Spain and wreak vengeance upon Rodrigo.

A little lower down, to left, some dilapidated brown walls overlooking the Tagus are pointed out as Rodrigo's palace. That guilty monarch was the hero of an extraordinary adventure. One day, when seated on his throne in his audience chamber, he was approached by two venerable strangers attired in sweeping white garments girdled, at the waist, with the signs of the zodiac, whence dangled innumerable keys. Their flowing robes, and long snowy beards excited interest and commanded respect. Bowing before the King the old men begged him to repair to the tower built by Hercules, and affix the usual padlock to the door, as was customary with each successive monarch who ruled over Toledo.

After their departure Rodrigo was seized with an overwhelming curiosity as to the interior of the tower. Repairing thither, at the head of his knights, he found the small portal loaded with padlocks. At either side stood the ancient door-keepers wearing the keys suspended in a fringe from their belts. Rodrigo commanded them to unlock the door. In vain they and Urbino, the saintly Archbishop, pleaded with the King to forbear. He was inexorable. Even when the last key had reluctantly turned, the iron door remained fast until Rodrigo, impatient at the delay, advanced. He no sooner laid his hand upon it than it flew open. Instantly an icy wind swept from the dark cavernous opening, whence emerged deafening sounds. Urged on by curiosity the King advanced. After a while he reached a subterranean hall pierced, at its further end, by an arched door. In front of it, guarding the approach, towered a gigantic figure of bronze complexion. The monster wielded a mace wherewith it dealt resounding blows to left and right. Rodrigo bade the fearsome apparition be still and let him pass. Instantly it obeyed. Within lay a wondrous chamber the walls and dome aglow with precious gems. In the centre stood an alabaster table and on it a jewel encrusted casket of purest gold. The King forced the lid open only to find a folded cloth inside. Shaking it apart he saw that it was covered with countless figures of Arab warriors and the inscription: "Rash monarch! Behold the men who are to hurl thee from thy throne and subdue thy kingdom." The prophecy was speedily fulfilled, nevertheless there have been found historians so sceptical as to question the authenticity of the legend.

Having been told that the entrance to the celebrated subterranean palace still existed I was bent upon finding it. This was easier said than done. No one in Toledo seemed ever to have heard of such a place. Finally, by dint of questioning everyone I met, I came across a priest, who laughed heartily and said that I should find it in the Callejan de San Gines. Escorted by a small boy I proceeded to the steep and narrow alley in question. There I found an old, but solid wooden door, inset in lofty and very massive walls of uncut stone decorated with fragments of very fine carving, scallop shells, bands of foliage and traces of saintly figures. My youthful guide, a really intelligent lad apprenticed to a cobbler, picked up a stone and hammered on the door, shouting lustily the while. There was no response. Finally, from a neighbour, we gained the information that the key might be procured from Jose de los Infantes, a confectioner in the Calle de Belen. Thither we went. The confectioner said that he had the key and that I could have it on the morrow. In vain I pleaded that would be too late, as I was due to leave Toledo at 6 a.m. At this he assured me there was nothing to see. The wooden door, which I was so desirous of penetrating, admitted to a ruined court, the site of the demolished church of San Gines. The entrance to the famous subterranean passage was closed and to that he had no key. With this I was obliged to be satisfied. He followed me to the threshold of his shop where, with a reassuring smile, he reiterated the time honoured Spanish formula, "Manana" (To-morrow).

CHAPTER XVI

EL ESCORIAL

THOSE hypersensitive people, whose natural bent, like that of the poet, inclines them to solitudes "far from the madding crowd," will do well to avoid the Escorial on a Sunday. The royal mausoleum is for Madrilenos very much what Hampton Court is for Londoners. This came as a revelation to me. The gloomy accounts given by Gautier, Hare and numerous other celebrated authorities, whose views I had imbibed with respectful enthusiasm, had convinced me that the seventeenth century palace built by Philip II was the last place on earth to attract trippers bent on a joyous outing. Great, therefore, was my surprise to find half a dozen claimants for every available seat in the early Sunday morning train from Madrid. Entire families, laden with substantial picnic baskets, were bound for what I had been persuaded was one of the most melancholy and depressing spots in creation.

The journey of thirty-one miles occupied a little over two hours. Hilly, boulder strewn, dotted with scrub and a few insignificant trees the country traversed is arid and inhospitable. Much of it is practically desert. On a bleak winter's day, with an icy wind blowing, it must be cheerless in the extreme. Even in mid summer, when bathed in radiant sunshine under a sky of cloudless, most beautiful blue, it manages to look dreary.

Two immense motor buses, one yellow, the other grey, met the train. Both filled immediately. I was obliged to await their return before getting a seat. Soon I was being shaken, jolted and bumped uphill to be finally deposited on the rough cobble stone pavement outside the Hotel Regina. The small balcony of my bedroom overhung the main street. Immediately across the way, screened by the dark green of tall intervening fir trees, rose the Escorial.

This much described building is of severe and monumental aspect. Of drab coloured granite, roofed with grey slate, it forms a large rectangle measuring 675 feet, from north to south, by 550 feet from east to west. Its outer faces are of

monotonous uniformity, when considered in detail, but effective as a whole and possessed of a certain frigid grandeur. Four rows of small windows rise one above the other. A fifth, composed of attic casements, protrudes from the shelving roof, whence start innumerable slender chimneys, their form suggested by Muhammadan minarets. From a distance the most impressive features are the large dome, and two lesser cupolas of the twin towers above the church, each terminating in a lofty pinnacle tipped by an immense ball, a weathercock and a cross. Square corner turrets, likewise ornamented with balls and tapering spires, appear at each angle of the great pile, the magnitude of which may be gathered from the fact that it contains sixteen courts, two thousand six hundred and seventy-three windows, one thousand two hundred doors and eighty-six staircases.

The grim severity of the Escorial is strangely in harmony with the wild grandeur of the landscape. Behind it the mountains form an amphitheatre of grey rock softened, in places, by the green of coarse grass shaded by woods of more sombre tone. Below, in the foreground, the tree dotted plain spreads like a gigantic saucer, ascending slightly as it nears the distant blue of the horizon. Overhead wheel thousands of swallows, their wings matching in hue the grey slates of the shelving roof. To north rises the town of solidly built granite houses, the narrow cobble paved streets climbing the hill in various directions.

In spite of the July heat the air is clear and invigorating. The brilliant sunshine is of a translucent golden quality very different to the fierce molten flame of the Orient. It is a light admirably adapted to give colours their full value; a radiant illumination, rather than a burning breath of fire, which scorches and destroys.

All day long, with every incoming train, the great grey and yellow buses come labouring uphill filled to overflowing with passengers in festival mood. In some cases the women had donned the hats of their male escorts, for the manners of holidaymakers the world over are, apparently, very much the same.

An anecdote attributes the Escorial to the victory scored by Filiberto, Duke of Savoy, at San Quentin on July 10th, 1557, when the great Marechal Montmorency was taken prisoner. Immediately Don Martin de Gurrea, of Aragon, was despatched with the good news to Philip, who was then at Cambray. The monarch was overjoyed. In the fullness of

his gratitude he exclaimed that, as the day was the one dedicated by the Church to San Lorenzo, he would found a monastery and place it under the protection of that Saint, to perpetuate the glorious anniversary. In his own words he aspired to erect "una casa para Dios y una choza para el Rey." Furthermore he determined that the edifice should be designed on the lines of the gridiron upon which St. Lawrence suffered martyrdom with such stoical fortitude that he is reported to have said to his tormentors: "I am roasted on one side: now turn me over."

The eminent architect, Juan de Bautista, was instructed to draw the plans. He died shortly after the foundation stone had been laid and was succeeded by Herrera.

Philip took the greatest interest in the work, which he personally supervised. On the rocky pine-clad heights above the Escorial a spot, entitled the Silla del Rey, is pointed out as the seat, whence the King used to watch the progress of the great granite pile slowly emerging from the boulder strewn side of the mountain.

In addition to being a house for God, and the residence of the greatest monarch of his epoch, the Escorial was called upon to combine the functions of a royal mausoleum, the will of Charles V having charged his son with the duty of providing an edifice of the kind. This fact may, in some degree, account for the unrelieved severity of the exterior. The monastery and college are housed in the rectangle of the gridiron, while the church and palace lie in the so-called handle, the foundations of which contain the tombs of the Kings and Queens of Spain from the Austrian accession down to the present day.

The main entrance looks west on to a great empty terrace, stone flagged and dreary, bordered with a low wall. Beyond stretch tree planted paseos, and long lines of granite buildings united by overhead passages, which arch above narrow intersecting streets and preserve uninterrupted connection. Eight Tuscan columns, divided by empty niches, flank the tall central door of the façade, which is surmounted by a statue of St. Lawrence, by Monegro. The figure is 13 feet high, and is entirely of granite, with the exception of the face and hands. These are of white marble and gleam strangely in the sunshine. The right hand grasps a gridiron. At either side Ionic pillars rise to support the triangular pediment decorated with the arms of Austria, the points emphasised by cannon balls in reminder, doubtless, of the victory at St. Quentin.

Within lies a square flagged court, the Patio de los Reyes, overlooked, to north and south, by six rows of singularly unresponsive windows. A wide arcade stretches along the west side. To east rises the church, its face adorned with six smooth columns and five Roman arches dominated by majestic figures, by Monegro, representing six Kings of Israel resplendent in high gilt crowns. David is further distinguished by a golden harp, and Solomon by a sceptre and book of the law. Tall square belfries, capped by cupolas, stand at either corner.

Shallow steps lead up to the verandah. An inscription, above one of the five church doors, states that the edifice was dedicated to St. Lawrence, by Philip II and consecrated on August 30th, 1595. The interior takes the form of a Greek cross and is most imposing. The lofty arched roof is covered with brilliantly coloured frescoes, in which a bright penetrating blue is the predominant tone. The great central dome is of plain grey granite and rests upon four immense piers, each 32 metres in circumference. It is pierced by large windows filled with clear glass, and barred with iron, hence the cold, rather austere effect.

Two steep flights of mottled red marble steps ascend to the Capilla Mayor, which is decorated with the utmost splendour by a variety of artists. The retablo above the altar is 85 feet in height and correspondingly magnificent. The eight painted panels are by Zucarro and Tibaldi. They are interspersed with marble pillars and fifteen large statues of gilt bronze by Leoni, to whom are also due the crucifix and two very beautiful pulpits, of porphyry and gold, emblazoned with armorial bearings, under regal canopies in the form of gilt cupolas.

At either side are the four so-called oratorios, low cavities of black marble. Above them rise richly ornate balconies peopled with kneeling groups of brightly gilt bronze figures. That, on the right, contains the effigy of Charles V, the most powerful monarch of his time. From his mother he inherited the kingdoms of Spain and Naples. He acquired the Duchy of Milan, which embraced the major portion of Lombardy, and became possessed of Mexico and Peru, with their mines of gold and silver. Great, therefore, was the universal surprise, not unmingled with consternation, when this mighty potentate, with wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, voluntarily renounced the throne, and its attendant pomps and vanities, for the solitude of San Juste, in which monastical retreat he passed the last years of his life, the "world forgetting" if not "by the world forgot." With him, in his costly balcony of

marble and gold, kneel his wife, Isabella of Portugal, the mother of Philip II, their daughter, Maria, and the Emperor's two sisters, Leonora and Mary.

For his part Philip II is accompanied by three of his four wives. In the front row kneels Anna, the mother of Philip III. Behind are Maria of Portugal and her son Don Carlos, and Isabella, his wife. His cousin, Mary Tudor, to whom he was espoused from 1554 until 1558, is not represented. Possibly the brief matrimonial episode with England's Queen left none too pleasant a memory followed, as it was, by the destruction of the Armada, in 1588, and the sack of Cadiz in 1596.

The Primera Piedra, or foundation stone, lies behind the altar. Immediately below is the Pantheon containing the Royal sepulchres. On the left of the Capilla Mayor side doors communicate with the private apartments of Philip II. Through the one opening out of his bedroom the monarch's dying eyes looked their last, on September 13th, 1598, upon the brilliantly lit altar, until the brightest of earthly candles grew dim, and dark, quenched by a radiance compared with which the lights of this world are as the stars to the sun.

The upper choir occupies the gallery to west and consists of a hundred and twenty-four stalls. Philip's seat was in the south-west angle. The body of the church is lined with numerous handsome chapels. In addition altars appear at the base of the great pillars. The funny little confessionals are like sedan chairs. The interior is very light, and the acoustic properties have the effect of magnifying the voice to an imposing volume of sound out of all proportion to the diminutive figures of priests, in vestments of scarlet and gold, and choir boys, in white and red who, dwarfed by the size and height of the building, appear so many marionettes worked automatically by invisible wires.

The Pantheon is reached by way of the Claustro Principal, a large quadrangle enclosed by wide stone galleries, the outer walls completely covered with immense frescoes representing scenes from the New Testament, varied by an occasional oil painting on wood. The effect is marred by the inner walls being blocked, so as to exclude all view of the tree planted patio, and granite pavilion, in the centre.

Two flights of granite steps lead abruptly down to a sumptuous door of grey marble, carved, coloured and gilt, surmounted by crowns and the royal arms. Beyond this magnificent portal grey marble stairs, at once narrow and steep, descend

to the mausoleum, a domed octagonal chamber of grey and red marble resplendent with gilding, entered by a gate of gilt bronze. Opposite the threshold stands a simple altar supporting a large silver crucifix. All around stretch tier upon tier of shelves filled with big grey marble caskets of uniform design. Each stands on four metal feet shaped like the claws of an eagle, and bears, on its outer side, a gilt name plate inscribed with black lettering. The Kings lie on the left and the Queens, whose sons have ascended the throne, on the right. None but the mothers of sovereigns may aspire to the honour of a niche in the Pantheon, a wise precaution in view of the limited space, and the fact that the majority of Spanish monarchs were much married men. In all there are twenty-six caskets beginning with Charles V and ending with Alfonso XII, the father of the present King. It is remarkable that, in spite of revolutions and invasions, the Pantheon should have remained intact.

Report states that the coffin of Charles V has twice been opened. The second occasion was in honour of the visit of the Emperor of Brazil, in 1876, when thousands viewed the corpse, which was in a perfect state of preservation but had turned the dark brown colour usual to mummies. Although the mother of a sovereign the widow of Ferdinand VII is not buried here, having forfeited her right by contracting a second marriage.

Upstairs, and past the locked door of the vault named, with revolting realism, the *Pudridero*, from the fact that corpses are placed in it until such time as they are fit to be removed to the splendid tombs prepared for their reception. Beyond is the Pantheon de los Infantes, a suite of sepulchral chambers destined for members of the royal family. The first contains six surprisingly beautiful sarcophagi in white marble and gold. Particularly arresting is the shrouded girlish form of the Infanta Maria de Mercedes, stretched as though in sleep on the coffin lid. The next vault contains twelve box-like marble tombs of uniform design, then another and yet another crowded with great rectangular mausolea, so through to a small chamber completely blocked by the spacious grave of Don John of Austria, natural son of Charles V and victor in the epoch-making naval battle of Lepanto, in 1571. It is impossible to gaze upon the clear cut features, and noble form of the marble warrior without drawing a comparison unfavourable to Philip II.

A corner vault contains what, at first glance, appears a



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gigantic wedding cake. Of white marble and gold the huge round tomb rises in three sculptured tiers emblazoned, in brilliant colours, with the armorial bearings of sixty princes and princesses interred beneath. Tall white heraldic figures, armed with golden maces, stand on guard before the arch leading through to three final galleries of the dead, one more splendid than the other, with their wealth of carving, coloured escutcheons and gilt crowns.

Back to the cloisters, whence the grand staircase leads up under a wonderfully painted ceiling, whereon the Apotheosis of San Lorenzo is depicted in a manner eminently reassuring to the mighty of the earth. Side by side, in ecstasy before the Throne, kneel Charles V and his son Philip II. The former is splendidly clad in crimson and orange, the Spanish colours, and holds a royal diadem in either hand. The other is in yellow, under a flowing mantle of ermine, and grasps a terrestrial globe. Charles II is likewise included among the elect. In the corners are clusters of allegorical figures, elephants, lions, ostriches, a serpent and an eagle. The walls are covered with frescoes treating of religious subjects, while the frieze sets forth battle scenes.

At the foot of the stairs a door leads into the old church, in which Philip II was at his devotions when the courier arrived with the news of the victory of Lepanto. Here, too, he attended the requiem mass for Mary Queen of Scots, on April 18th, 1587. The walls are hung with wreaths whence fall wide black ribbons emblazoned with the name of Alfonso XII in gilt letters. Above the altar is a gloomy painting, by Titian, of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. The only light in the picture comes from the flames, and a watery half moon almost veiled in black clouds. Roman soldiers, armed with long spears, are forcing the Saint down upon the gridiron.

The apartments of Philip II remain as they were in the lifetime of that monarch. First the guide hurried us through some half dozen galleries hung with immense tapestries after Goya, Bayeu, Castille, etc., woven in the Royal Factory at Madrid. Thereafter we descended a narrow granite stair to the royal suite planned by Philip when his sole desire in life was, to quote his own words: "a cell, wherein he might bear his weary limbs to the grave." As a matter of fact the impression made by the whitewashed walls, blue and white porcelain dadoes, red brick floors, oil paintings and tapestries, of the many rooms, is one of rich and elegant restraint. They form

an admirable setting for a cultured recluse, one who, having feasted generously at life's banquet, has become something of a dyspeptic as well as an epicure. This is particularly apparent in his private apartments. His writing room is long, narrow and sparingly furnished. The bureau is the one before which he was seated when news was brought to him of the destruction of his fleet off the British coast. Above it is a book case with glass doors. The volumes have their backs to the wall, and their titles printed in black lettering on the edges of the leaves.

His gilt bed stands in an alcove hard by, under a canopy of cherry colour and gold embroidered with kingly crowns, as is the pale blue and crimson silk counterpane. An oratory adjoins his sleeping apartment whence a door opens into the Capilla Mayor. Visitors are shown a fragile looking ebony chair upholstered in leather. In this they are told Philip II was carried about the Escorial.

The Library is situated upstairs in the south wing. It consists of a long arched gallery paved with marble under a roof bright with colour and gilding. Bookshelves of inlaid mahogany, cedar, ebony and walnut, line the sides. In place of glass they are protected by wire netting. The volumes are bound in calf, and stand in gilt edged security with their backs to the wall, as though bent upon baffling curiosity by concealing their identity. Down the centre a number of splendidly emblazoned tomes lie open in glass cases. Among them is the breviary of Philip II. Above it is a small book of devotions used by Maria of Austria and a missal belonging to Isabella, the Catholic. One brilliantly illuminated tome, dating from the 13th century, is labelled the work of English Augustinians from "Welvectensi de Inglaterra," wherever that may be. In addition there are rare and valuable Hebrew and Arabic works of interest to the crude.

Among the portraits is one of Philip II dressed entirely in black but for gauffered outstanding collar and cuffs of white. Opposite hangs a likeness of Charles V clad, as was his habit, in full armour. There is a marked resemblance between father and son. Another painting shows Charles II at the age of fourteen. The Prince has the characteristic features of his race, a long nose, lidless eyes and protruding underlip.

Near the door a large revolving globe of gilt metal rests upon four wooden sphinx-like figures. This was the sphere

used by Philip II in his astronomical observations. Outside, in the gallery, is a small bust of Herrera. The architect of the Escorial is represented as a fair curly headed man with a slightly upturned nose, small pointed beard and alert expression.

Behind the Escorial lies a wide terrace garden laid out with prim box hedges as straight as though drawn with a ruler. No flowers bloom in the granite wilderness, the petrified expression of a monk's melancholy. Close behind the Escorial lies a very different palace, the Caseta del Principe, built, in 1772, by Carlos IV when Prince of the Asturias. It is very like the Casa del Labrador erected by the same debonnair monarch at Aranjuez some thirty years later, and stands in well wooded grounds. The atmosphere is fragrant with the resinous odour of pines. At the gate is a guardian in a very fine uniform of buff colour and red, his large grey felt hat banded with scarlet, caught, on one side, by a shining silver badge. A wide walk leads down to the miniature palace constructed from the same drab granite as the Escorial. The exterior is plain. Fluted pillars appear at either side of the portico below a balcony and square mirador. The shutters are a bright shade of green. By contrast the interior seems overloaded with rich decoration. The walls are painted and hung with gleaming brocades. Even more elaborate are the ceilings some of which are in the style of Pompeii. The floors are equally splendid, while the furniture is gorgeous. Among the many statues a bust of Fernando VII occupies the place of honour enshrined in a pavilion of alabaster.

I returned to the balcony of my room in the hotel to await the advent of dinner. Night descended reluctantly upon the Escorial. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of swallows circled about the triple cupolas, twittering loudly as though in frenzied chase. The grey amphitheatre of the encircling Guadarramas assumed a more sombre tone. A pink radiance lit up the vast plain, patterned sparingly with trees, amid which an occasional white house gleamed like a pearl lined shell on the sea shore.

From the street below floated the shrill excited tones of children at play. Mingled with them were the deeper voices of their elders. Three large black and white storks winged their homeward flight to a dome-crowned tower of the Escorial. One by one lights appeared in the granite houses. A few jewel bright stars twinkled in the pale sky overhead. The

street filled with people. The faint fragrance of cigarettes, and the resinous odour of pines hung on the breath of night. For me the passing crowds below were so many nameless phantoms. Only the Kings and Queens in their subterranean halls of marble and gold were real.

CHAPTER XVII

AVILA, SEGOVIA AND LA GRANJA

AS the 9 a.m. train for Avila leaves the station a farewell glimpse is caught of the Casa del Principe. For an instant the façade of the toy palace appears framed in green, at the far end of a long straight avenue. Almost immediately the fleeting impression is erased by a majestic view of the Escorial, seen at its best from this point. The great drab coloured palace stands out boldly, above the sombre tops of the trees, against a background of mountains. Thereafter the country grows wilder and more rocky. In places it is partitioned by low crudely constructed walls of loosely piled stone. The uneven ground is thickly strewn with boulders making it seem as though a gigantic hammer had been at work breaking up the encircling hills. In effective contrast to the dark lichen stained stones, the soil is a light sandy yellow.

The first stop is at Zarzalejo at the foot of jagged grey cliffs mutilated by extensive quarrying. Heaps of cleanly cut blocks, the size and shape of bricks, alternate with big slabs of granite of the same coarse grained, pepper and salt variety as that characteristic of the Escorial.

Soon afterwards the train plunges amid pine-clad ridges to halt at Rollido, a little wayside station, its platform charged with bulky wineskins, tied round the neck and stoppered after the manner of rubber hot water bottles. Deep rocky cuttings follow, and an occasional tunnel. Beyond Santa Maria yellow fields of wheat climb the slopes to left. Pines show black on the heights against the blue and silver of a sky having the mottled effect of marble. Speedily the forest closes in again. Most of the trees display deep gashes, whence slowly oozing gum arabic trickles into small tin mugs.

The pines continue all the way to Las Navas del Marques famed for the sixteenth century castle built by Don Pedro de Avila. This picturesque stronghold is not visible from the railway. It now belongs to the Duke of Medina Celli, to whose ancestor Christopher Columbus owed his introduction

to Ferdinand and Isabella at Cordova, in April, 1487. Woods stretch in every direction. The atmosphere is charged with the resinous breath of pines, and the soil is of a tawny red scattered with boulders and bright with flowering weeds.

Gradually the forest clears. Oxen appear dragging loads of timber, their heavy wooden yolks set high on the nape of the neck, and securely bound to the horns by stout ropes. The mountains expand allowing a wide view of irregular stony plain, mostly poor pasture land. In the middle distance blue-grey smoke hangs, cloud-like, over a large village of brown roofed houses. Elsewhere a great white pillar of dust rises fully sixty feet in the air with curious effect. Ultimately Avila is reached at 1 p.m. It had taken the train four hours to cover thirty-two miles.

A small old fashioned mule bus was waiting outside the station. The interior being full I scrambled up on to the box seat beside the driver. It was very hot and dusty. In addition there were swarms of flies attracted, apparently, by a rather bulky package on the roof. Altogether I was very pleased to reach the hotel, a friendly old-time hostel, near neighbour to the Archbishop's palace and the ancient Cathedral. Here I was fortunate enough to secure the only available bedroom, a dim apartment smelling of pine, its square window looking on to an inner patio paved with the inevitable cobble stones.

There is nothing new in Avila. The city on the hill top has successfully defied the onslaughts of time and change. Secure within its mediæval ramparts it has passed through tempestuous youth, and war tried middle age to the peace of outlived desire.

Of a reddish yellow colour the massive battlements are of natural rock, and big irregular stones pierced by ten gates, and strengthened by eighty-six formidable towers. Probably the foundations date from Roman times, or even earlier. Popular tradition, however, ascribes the existing walls to the reign of Alfonso VI who drove out the Moors and placed the city under his son-in-law, Count Raymond of Burgundy. The latter is said to have employed eight hundred men daily, for nine years, upon constructing the fortifications.

A wide and very picturesque road runs round the exterior. This makes a romantic walk, especially soon after dawn, or just as the sun is setting over the far-flung plain. Below, in the valley, lie a number of old churches, their grey dilapidation giving no hint of the treasures within. Beyond stretches

brown country, boulder strewn and tree dotted, with, here and there, a yellow gleam of ripening grain. It is very lonely under the old ramparts. The silence appeals to the imagination. Four tall black and white storks stand motionless on a weather-worn bastion. For a brief moment they arrest attention, then fancy jerks itself free from material objects and wings its flight backward down the centuries. Across the brown lowlands swarms a sunburnt host of fierce desert warriors mounted on swift Barbary steeds. The light flashes on the star and crescent of their standard. Inside the walls all is tumult and confusion. The men are away. Only the women are left, with a few greybeards and children, to defend the city. At this juncture an intrepid dame takes command, Jimina Blasquez, wife of Fernan Lopez, the Governor. The gallant lady serves out helmets, arms and armour to the women and orders them to take the place of their absent husbands on the battlements. Upon perceiving the strength of the position, and the host of warriors, the Almoravides, who had hoped to effect a surprise and find the stronghold undefended, abandoned the attack.

The scene changes to the gate of the Alcazar. It is the fifteenth century and all Castile is torn by warring factions. The weak King Henry IV sits upon the throne, but the sceptre is swayed by the detested favourite, Beltran de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque. This is common knowledge in the realm, where all agree that the unpopular minister is the Queen's lover, and therefore father of the Princess Juana, nicknamed la Beltraneja. All murmur, but Avila speaks aloud. Outside the Puerta del Alcazar a high scaffold is raised, decked with royal emblems and a throne, on which mocking hands place an effigy of the monarch, in all the bravery of crown, state robes and sceptre. A crier recites a long list of grievances while the effigy is unrobed and flung from the dais. Then, to shouts of "God save King Alfonso!" the young prince, half brother of the reigning sovereign, is raised to the throne and the royal standard displayed before him.

Two men, riding postilion on a small donkey, rouse me from my reverie. I follow them through the obscure passage of the gateway into the great open square of the Mercado Grande, sparingly planted with acacias, and surrounded by arcades, shops, cafés and the ancient Church of San Pedro. From the centre rises a tall pedestal and lofty fluted column surmounted by the figure of a nun holding a pen, in one hand,

and a book, in the other. This is Santa Teresa, the most remarkable woman of her epoch in Spain. Born in Avila, on March 28th, 1515, she was the daughter of Don Alfonso Sanchez de Cepede and Donna Beatrix Ahumada, an exemplary couple, although the lady, it is whispered, had a weakness for reading romances. From this it would appear that Santa Teresa inherited her vivid imagination from her mother. As a little child she listened with rapt attention to stories of the saints. When only eight years old she set off with her small brother for Africa, in the hope of being martyred by the Muhammadans. After her mother's death the little girl was placed in the Augustinian Convent in Avila. There she decided to become a nun. Despite her father's opposition she took the veil in the Carmelite Chapel of the Incarnation, to north of the city, on All Souls' Day, 1533, at the age of eighteen. At first it seemed as though she had mistaken her vocation. She suffered from ill health and her mind was not at ease. Gradually, however, her doubts were set at rest and she became filled with pious fervour. The rules, which obtained at that time in religious institutions, were too lax for her liking. She collected funds and founded the Convent of St. Joseph, in her native city. Encouraged by this initial success she proceeded to inaugurate seventeen convents, and fifteen monasteries in all of which discipline was strictly enforced.

In spite of constant ill health her activity was astounding even for those strenuous days of Herculean effort. Finally she died on October 4th, 1582, in her own convent at Avila, aged sixty-seven. The house, in which she was born, is now the Church of Nuestra Serafica Madre Santa Teresa de Jesus. Her rosary, and the sandals, which she wore, are preserved in a small chapel, the room wherein she first saw the light of day. Another site, intimately connected with her religious life, is San Juan, in the Mercado Chico, where she was baptised on April 7th, 1515.

Avila is rich in saints. The ancient basilica of San Vicente, immediately outside the gate of that name, enshrines the actual rock upon which St. Vicente and his two sisters suffered martyrdom, under Dacian, in the fourth century. Built of reddish orange stone the venerable fane is protected, on the south side, by a deep verandah of Roman arches supported by small clustering pillars and wide piers. The arched door is composed of seven graduated ridges, alternately carved and plain, flanked by five large figures. A steep flight of

steps descends to the interior, dim, chill with the damp breath of a vault, and mysterious ; a place whence the light and warmth of the sun have been excluded for centuries. Tombstones, with deeply cut inscriptions, and florid armorial bearings, form the pavement, which is divided into three aisles by ponderous columns. In the centre rests a lidless gilt coffin. To right rises the lofty tomb of St. Vincent under a high pointed canopy of carved wood overlaid with gold leaf. The stone sarcophagus is covered with sculpture depicting scenes in the lives of San Vicente, and his sisters Sabina and Cristina, who all three suffered martyrdom on a rock embedded in the foundations of the church. Tradition asserts that their bodies were guarded by a serpent, who seized upon a passing Jew and wound its coils tightly about his body. The unhappy Hebrew invoked the name of Christ and instantly regained freedom, in gratitude for which he buried the bodies and built a church above them. When the Christians wrested Avila from the Moors doubts were entertained as to whether the remains of St. Vincent and his sisters had been disturbed. In order to decide the question Bishop Martin de Velches caused the sarcophagus to be opened. A dense vapour ascended therefrom into which he plunged his hand, only to withdraw it covered in blood. For a long time it was customary to be sworn upon the tomb, under which circumstance those guilty of perjury were believed to wither away.

Deep steps lead down to the crypt, which consists of three small and rather crowded chapels, one of which contains the miraculous figure of the Virgin known as Nuestra Senora de la Sotterana. In another is the rock against which the brains of St. Vincent and his sisters were dashed out for refusing to acknowledge the pagan gods of ancient Rome.

The main door is at the west end of the basilica facing the altar. It is a curious and beautiful portal. Amid the involved mass of sculpture are the heads of cows. Beyond lie the city walls and the gate of St. Vincent flanked by protruding twin turrets of circular form connected, at the very top, by a shallow flying arch. These advance boldly from the city wall, which is pierced by a low tunnel like passage. Between the gate and the church are a couple of those curious stone crosses, which appear here and there throughout the city.

War and religion constituted the chief preoccupations of Avila of old hence the strength of the ramparts, which were called upon to safeguard the boy king, Alfonso VIII, from

his uncle Fernando of Leon, and the number of churches, convents and monasteries. The quaint old Cathedral is partly built into the battlements. It conveys an impression of considerable antiquity. Dedicated to San Salvador it was founded by Fernan Gonzalez, Count of Castile in the tenth century. The west door is guarded by a couple of stone lions, mounted on pedestals, with rings in their mouths, whence they are fastened, by heavy iron chains, to the wall. Near them stand two prehistoric figures clad in sheepskins and bearing shields. Above, tapers the pointed arch of a most beautiful portal, its carved elaboration in striking contrast to the unadorned severity of the remainder of the façade, the north-west corner of which is emphasised by a square tower, its companion, to south, never having been finished.

The interior is extremely romantic, silent and dark. The brooding spirit of ages seems to dwell in that ancient fane peopled by stone knights and marble bishops. Here and there a rich gleam of gold, and vivid note of colour on lofty echoing roof, and sculptured screen, recall the gorgeous pageantry of that picturesque world in which their lines were cast. A row of slender pillars, remarkable for the delicacy and detail of the capitals, divides the ambulatory, the inner wall of which is covered with a wealth of reliefs representing chivalrous scenes, and knightly feats of arms interpreted in the true spirit of mediævalism.

I paid a second visit to the Cathedral at 6 a.m. on the following morning. At that early hour the great dim fane was lit by only two tapers. These flickered on a small altar to south of the transept. Within the restricted circle of light a young priest stood administering the Host to a kneeling group of countrywomen in big blue aprons, with black shawls on their heads, and baskets beside them. Behind, from the gloom of the choir stalls, glittered and gleamed the tall pointed canopy of the Cardinal's throne, and all around lay prelate and warrior in petrified sleep.

The cobble paved streets are lined with many noble mansions dating from the reign of Charles V. Some of the most illustrious have now been turned to plebeian account. It seems an architectural law that the first shall be last, hence the pitiful shelters to which the finest palaces have repeatedly been reduced. The workhouse is a case in point. It stretches between two bastions of the city wall, and is a handsome three storeyed building of cut stone. Over the

central door is a relief of a mounted knight succouring a beggar.

Avila also contains a military Academy for the training of officers destined for the Army Service Corps. This is situated in a steep and narrow Calle, which runs down hill from the Plaza Mayor, and consists of a low stone edifice built about an arcaded patio. Blue-green railings stretch along the narrow strip of front garden. The arched door is protected by twin sentry boxes, and is surmounted by coats of arms and a flagstaff. An inscription states that it is the Escuela Especial de Administracion Militar instituted by royal command on February 21st, 1853. Cadets wear uniforms similar to those of the Infantry at the Toledo Academy, except for the badge, which is a sun surrounded by a palm wreath. At the time of my visit some hundred and fifty cadets were going through their course. Their ages ranged from fifteen to twenty-three. Near by some storks had built an immense nest of grass and twigs, fully three feet in depth, on one of the bastions of the city walls.

None should leave Avila without paying a visit to San Tome famous for the exquisite white marble tomb of Prince Juan, only son of Ferdinand and Isabella. Domenico Fancelli, a Florentine artist, was responsible for the work. His effigy of the young prince is so life-like that, as one authority puts it, he has succeeded in expressing adolescence in stone.

Born on June 30th, 1478, Prince Juan was a youth of brilliant promise, and of most amiable disposition. When in his seventeenth year he was married to Margaret, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian of Hapsburg, on April 3rd, 1497. In the following October he died. Shortly afterwards his girl widow gave birth to a still-born child. These, and the dramatic series of tragic deaths which followed in the royal family were attributed to the Curse of the Jews. Not content with celebrating the conquest of Granada by an edict banishing Hebrews from the Spanish realm, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella further insisted that Portugal should do the same, before they would consent to the marriage of their widowed daughter, Isabella, with King Emmanuel. The wedding occurred at Vol de Alcantara in September, 1497, and was promptly succeeded by the demise of Prince Juan. At this Isabella, Queen of Portugal, became heir to the Spanish throne, but died in childbirth, leaving a little son, Don Miguel, who only lived two years. The madness of their daughter Juana, and the unhappy marriage of their youngest

child Catherine, to Henry VIII of England, made it seem as though the Curse of the Jews had indeed fallen upon the Catholic Sovereigns.

The Sacristy contains a plain tomb. Under it lies Tomas de Torquemada, the first Grand Inquisitor of Spain. He held the dread office from its inauguration, in 1480, until his death, at Avila, in 1498. The Inquisition had no jurisdiction over avowed Jews. It was specially instituted to deal with Conversos, or Converts, who formed the wealthiest members of the community, until Ferdinand and Isabella were inspired to institute a vigorous enquiry into the orthodoxy of their views. Those who failed to satisfy the religious tribunal were condemned to death by burning. Their property was confiscated by the crown. By this means the royal treasury was constantly replenished, and the war with Granada carried to a successful issue. In Avila the Market Place, now adorned by the statue of Saint Theresa, was the scene of these autos de fé.

There is no direct train communication between the old fortress city of the knights and Segovia. Mails and passengers are carried by a motor bus, which leaves at 7 a.m. daily. I was warned to be early on the spot. Accompanied by the hotel porter, who carried my bag and was one of the cheeriest and most obliging individuals in the world, I set out fully an hour beforehand. The rendezvous was some five minutes distant, being just outside the Puerta San Vicente. A fine rain was falling, the first I had seen since the thunderstorm at Poblet. Punctually at the appointed hour a small grey bus emerged from the garage. The interior was narrow and cramped, and contained accommodation for eight passengers. As a matter of fact there were only two, a Guardia Civil and I.

We rattled downhill at a good pace between tall lines of poplars, and across irregular country strewn with boulders in many places. Few houses were passed and little traffic. Now and then the driver threw a mail bag to a man, or woman standing in readiness by the wayside. It was all very primitive. A rustic came riding along on a small donkey with a newly born calf on the saddle in front of him. Strings of heavily loaded donkeys followed soberly, and a little sadly, in the wake of a leader round whose neck hung a great iron bell fully a foot in depth.

There was a long halt at Villacastin, an old market town of solidly built stone houses roofed with red tiles, and an imposing church, its square tower capped by a large dome.

Here the Guardia Civil got out. His place was taken by a burly farmer, whose kit consisted of a saddle bag gaily worked in the brightest of yellows, reds, greens and blues. He promptly began to lament the discomfort of the hard and very narrow seat, then laughed goodnaturedly and proceeded to compose himself for slumber.

The journey was uneventful. The road was good and for the most part shadeless, as it wound uphill and down dale past an occasional village set in the midst of ripening grain. Finding sleep impossible my companion roused himself and pointed out various places of interest, notably the Palacio de Riofrio, a great red edifice used, he informed me, by the King and Queen of Spain as a hunting box. It is a perfect square with four doors, and was built in 1751 by Queen Isabel Farnesia as a country retreat. Here she resided with the Marques de Paredes, while her political husband, Don Fernando VI lived in the neighbouring palace of La Granja, famed for the finest and most extensive gardens in Spain some say in Europe.

Finally, at 10 a.m., the motor bus deposited me in the Plaza del Azoquejo, midway up the hill crowned by the ancient and picturesque city of Segovia. At that hour the old market place presented an animated appearance. Of irregular shape, and roughly paved with cobble stones it was lined with little booths crowded with foodstuffs, vegetables, fruit, meat and bread. Earthenware water vessels were spread out upon the ground. Big oxen stood placidly yoked to heavy wagons. Carts creaked past, drawn by five and six mules of different sizes harnessed tandem, a donkey at the head, and a flock of white sheep completely blocked the approach to a narrow side street. High above all towered the great Roman aqueduct, a colossus striding across the plaza in two tiers of U-shaped arches built of immense blocks of grey granite. The effect was extraordinary, almost fantastical. It was impossible to view, unmoved, this link with antiquity. In this prosaic twentieth century it seemed a ghost that had allowed itself to be surprised by daylight, and, held prisoner by the brilliant sunshine, could not find its way back to the congenial shades of night, its appropriate realm. Lofty, imperial, at once so disconcertingly near and so uncannily remote, it made the moving crowds on the cobble stones far below seem so many ants.

The aqueduct dates from Augustus. It and the walls of Tarragona constitute the most considerable Roman remains

in Spain. The portion of it situated between the monasteries of St. Francis and the Conception was destroyed by the Muhammadans in the eleventh century, during an attempt to recapture the city. Isabella, the Catholic, fell under the spell of the wonderful structure and decided to restore the thirty-six ruined arches. Acting on the advice of the Prior of el Parel she entrusted the work to a young monk named Escevedo. He did it so well that it is not easy to detect the counterfeit from the original. In recompense for many years of strenuous labour he was allowed to keep the timber used in the scaffolding, from which it would appear that he was not overpaid.

Steep and narrow calles, lined with romantic old mansions of interest alike to the artist and historian, ascend to the Plaza de Constitucion, a large oblong space, the favourite evening resort of all classes of society, who foregather at the little tables outside the cafés. On the south-west side stretches the great yellow Cathedral, with its three tiers of roofs bristling with innumerable small spires characterised by thorn-like projections. A mural tablet bears the date 1571 under a crown and the royal arms. To north lies the Teatro Juan Bravo, and, on the west, the mediæval Town Hall. Opposite is the ancient Church of San Miguel. A row of irregular houses are built up against its wall, their bright pink, and yellow and green faces in picturesque contrast to its weather stained sunburnt brown. Further colour is lent by the carnations and geraniums blooming, with prodigal profusion, on each projecting balcony. Higher still little windows peep from amid the red tiles of the shelving roofs.

Towards sunset the pavement below fills with a motley crowd. Prominent among the moving figures are the horizon grey uniforms, white caps and scarlet bands of Artillery cadets. Beggars conscientiously make the round of all the tables outside the big corner cafés. Children cluster about vendors of cheap frozen custard, which masquerades as icecream. Blue coated bootblacks ply their trade with an energy which causes the foreigner to reconsider his verdict of the Spanish character. A khaki clad officer gallops across the square. A man leads a heavily laden mule by a frayed end of rope, and two black robed nuns follow slowly, with modestly downcast eyes.

The principal entrance to the Cathedral is the Puerta del Perdon, a fine Renaissance door added in 1626. The interior is light, lofty and spacious. Unfortunately much of the

effect is marred by the coro, the outer walls of which are coloured in gaudy imitation of yellow marble, further ornamented with tall white statues in niches. All around stretch side chapels richly decorated with the usual gilding, sculptured saints, pontiffs, martyrs, and oil paintings. In one a curious old picture of the Crucifixion depicts Our Lord wearing a lace edged skirt. The railed off passage between the choir and the Capilla Mayor is paved with the tombstones of Bishops. Silver figures of the Virgin and the Child are enshrined above the High Altar which is conspicuous for a splendid marble retablo. The inner wall of the ambulatory is plain to bareness, in striking contrast to the eight encircling chapels. That dedicated to St. Anthony is hung with votive offerings of plaits of hair and small models of various parts of the human body.

The cloisters are the oldest portion of the edifice having been transferred from the ancient Cathedral, situated near the Alcazar. They are entered through a most beautiful door distinguished by a pointed arch surmounted by gorgeously coloured and gilt reliefs. Underfoot stretch endless graves with resplendent armorial bearings. The inner wall is pierced by a succession of immense empty window openings of elaborate and delicate design. These look on to a wilderness of weed and tall black cypress trees, which emits a rank odour as of rotting vegetation. A side door admits to the chapel of Santa Catalina now used as a lumber room for the storage of processional accessories, notably a magnificent gilt car carried at Corpus Cristo. Here, lost to sight, is the small railed off tomb of little Prince Pedro, son of King Henry II, who fell from a window of the Alcazar and was dashed to pieces. Tradition asserts that his careless nurse jumped out after him, and so met a similar fate. His marble effigy looks very peaceful clad in a tunic and ruff, his head resting on two corded and tasseled cushions.

The north-west corner of the cloister contains the stone sarcophagus of Maria del Salto, obit 1237, a beautiful Jewess condemned to death, by her co-religionists, for adultery. Accordingly she was taken to the Pena Grajera, or Crow's Cliff near by, and flung over the precipice. On the brink she invoked the name of the Virgin, and reached the bottom unscathed, in gratitude for which she embraced Christianity. The wall above her much carved tomb displays a fresco depicting the scene of execution. Maria appears, with streaming black hair, in a long white robe bound tightly

about her ankles. Her hands are similarly shackled. A group of gaily dressed cavaliers, and other picturesque personages are looking on at the edifying spectacle.

The north-west corner of the cloister is dominated by the lofty yellow belfry, a handsome square tower surmounted by two graduated pavilions and cupolas, its walls pierced by lancet windows. The stained glass, in the body of the Cathedral, is beautiful, and gains additional interest from the fact that it was manufactured in Segovia, Medina del Campo and Flanders. It dates from 1554. I had heard of the strange Spanish custom of draping sacred figures but had not come upon any examples of the kind until now. A side altar, near the door into the cloisters, supports a large crucifix bearing a life sized figure of Christ dressed in a skirt of rich purple brocade edged with deep gold fringe. The Sacristy contains some fine sixteenth century tapestries which reproduce scenes from Roman history.

A wide flagged terrace stretches in front of the Cathedral to west. The encircling walls are topped by stone lions bearing crowns and shields whereon are engraved the royal arms, and those of the city and Cathedral. The door on this side is the Puerta de San Frutos, named after the saint whose remains rest in a silver reliquary enshrined in a handsome marble retablo, erected by Henry III, in the *trascoro*. The third door is the Puerta San Geroteo situated at the top of twenty-five neglected and weed grown steps. The architect reserved his energies for the east end, the exterior of which is loaded with florid ornamentation and those inevitable heraldic devices, which constituted the favourite method of self advertisement in the middle ages.

A short walk leads to the Alcazar, the strongly fortified royal palace on the western crest of the hill overhanging the confluence of the Eresma, and Clamores, which mingle their waters some ninety-two metres below. In all probability a citadel stood here in Roman, or even Iberian times. The present castle dates from 1075 and was begun by Alfonso VI to whose son-in-law, Raymond of Burgundy, the city walls are attributed. During the nineteenth century the old royal residence, so intimately associated with the dynastic history of Spain, was converted into an Artillery school. Dissatisfied with being so far from Madrid the cadets set fire to it on March 6th, 1862, when much of the interior was destroyed. It is now used as a repository for military archives.

Entrance is by three handsome iron gates inscribed with



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the name and arms of Ferdinand VII and the date 1817. Inside stretches a large tree planted quadrangle, from the centre of which rises a splendid bronze monument commemorating Captains Luis Daoiz and Pedro Velarde, who died while defending the artillery park of Monteleon, Madrid, against an overwhelming French force on the fatal second of May, 1808. Beyond is the imposing yellow pile of the Alcazar, its foundations laid deep in the natural rock. The two immensely wide towers are respectively known as the Torre del Homenaje and the Torre de Juan Segundo. They are flanked by round turrets capped with pointed Gothic roofs of grey tile, and pierced with small iron barred windows.

A narrow stone bridge crosses a deep chasm in the yawning rock to a frowning portal adorned with crowns and the royal arms. A curious effect is achieved by the exterior decoration of the walls of the courtyard, which are covered with small rings formed, tattoo fashion, by innumerable dots. The guide led me to an outer terrace overhanging the precipice. At a giddy depth below, the Eresma flows past the old grey Mint built in 1586. All the money current in Spain was coined within its walls until 1730. Now it serves as a bakery. The cliffs opposite are patched with the dark cavernous mouths of cave dwellings. Higher still the sun shines upon the yellow walls and red roof of Vera Cruz. From amid the trees, on the river bank, float the silver toned bells of Santa Fuencisla, sheltered by the Crow's rock, whence the beautiful and erring Jewess was hurled in conformity with the stern laws of her faith. The spot, from which she was thrown, is marked by a small white shrine shaded by sentinel cypress trees. All around stretches irregular country patterned with fields, rocks, woods and churches, the horizon bounded by mountains.

Seen from the terrace the Torre del Homenaje is a most formidable structure, hence its ability to hold out for Isabella when the remainder of the city had been seized by the supporters of her niece, Juana.

The royal apartments surrounded the inner court dividing the two great towers. Of these the most interesting is the Throne Room, a long narrow hall, the panelled walls and ceiling bright with the colour and gilding of armorial bearings. A dais of three steps supports the two thrones, high backed Gothic chairs of dark wood under a red velvet canopy embroidered with eagles, crowns, escutcheons and the motto of Isabella and Ferdinand "Tapto Monta." Behind are massed

the standards of Leon, Castile, Aragon, Catalonia and the Sicilies. Near them hangs the death mask of Isabella, a full face with a large protruding chin. It was in Segovia that she was crowned Queen on December 13th, 1474, two days after her brother, Henry the Impotent, had passed away in his palace at Madrid. The herald proclaimed her accession in terms that rang none too sweetly in the ears of her royal husband: "Castile! Castile for King Don Fernando and his consort Dona Ysabel Queen Proprietress of those realms."

The Alcazar now includes an artillery museum representative of modern weapons manufactured in Spain notably swords and bayonets from the famous works in Toledo, and cannon, fuses and harness from Seville. Since the mutiny of 1862 the Military Academy has been situated outside the city walls. At the time of my visit it numbered five hundred gunner cadets. Their uniform is similar to that worn at Avila and Toledo, with the exception of the badge which consists of crossed cannon below a grenade.

Midway up the ridge, on the further bank of the Eresma, stands the lonely monastery of El Parrel, once a flourishing institution owned by the Order of St. Jerome. It is reached by a steep and winding road paved with cobble stones hard as the proverbial way of the transgressor. Built of light yellow stone the church looks on to a weed grown court. Traces of moulding show that the now bare façade was covered with florid decoration. A square tower, topped by an ornate belfry of fantastical design, stands at the south-west corner. The double doors are surmounted by a mitre shaped arch below a narrow window. Immediately under the pointed roof appear two immense coats of arms, those of the founder, Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena, and of his wife. The former was the most turbulent noble of his time, and is described as a restless intriguer with a passion for fishing in troubled waters. Of Portuguese descent he owed his introduction to the Castilian court to Alvara de Luna, the all powerful favourite of John II. Villena was a nephew of Carrillo, Archbishop of Toledo, and a brother of the Grand Master of Calatrava, who was on his way to Madrid to be married to Isabella, much against the will of that princess, when he suddenly died. In the struggle for the throne between Isabella and the partisans of her niece, Juana, Villena espoused first one side and then the other, as his interests dictated.

He founded El Parrel, in 1447, upon the site of a duel in

which he had successfully fought three assailants. Unfortunately I found the doors locked. No one was within sight or sound. I was about to turn away when three Jesuit priests appeared accompanied by a woman with a key. Following in their wake I entered by a side door leading into a court, a wilderness of vines and poppies, surrounded by ruined stone cloisters. The gallery on the left is known as the Pantheon and contains a number of stone sarcophagi. Among them is one containing the bones of Diego de Colmenares, the historian of Segovia. Another interesting tomb belongs to the twelfth century. The granite effigy of the knight interred therein depicts him with legs crossed, in sign of his having been a Crusader. The lions at his feet prove him to have been a Templar. The interior of the church, which was wrecked in the revolution of 1868, is bare, with the exception of a few beautiful tombs in niches on the wall, notably those of the founder and his wife, and of his natural daughter, the Countess de Medellina.

A fairly stiff climb brought me to the quaint twelve sided yellow Church of Vera Cruz on the crest of the ridge. Founded in 1204, by the Knights Templars, it is a reproduction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The design is massive and antique, and savours of the secret and mysterious. Entered from the south the inner walls are decorated with Maltese crosses. The interior is blocked by a central domed edifice two storeys in height, its massive masonry pierced by four arched doorways above one of which an inscription states that the sanctuary was consecrated in 1246. Very much worn steps ascend to the upper chamber, wherein a plain tombstone indicates the position of the Holy Sepulchre. The body of the Church is paved with graves. Side chapels are lodged in deep embrasures in the walls.

The far famed palace of San Ildefonso, or La Granja lies about eleven kilometres from Segovia, whence it is reached by bus. Personally I took a victoria drawn by two skeleton horses, one large and white, the other small and brown. The coachman, true to type, began by asking twenty-five pesetas, and ended by accepting fifteen. The road was hilly. As it neared the royal residence it developed into a series of splendid avenues lined successively with elms, chestnuts, poplars and yet again elms. Iron gates, with gilt crowns and monograms, gave access to grounds laid out with lawns, flower beds and very fine trees; pines, firs and copper beeches. This stately garden sloped up to the palace, a long two storeyed building

with a sharply shelving roof of slate. The centre is occupied by a cathedral-like edifice, the Church of San Ildefonso founded by Philip V who was subsequently buried therein with his Queen. It is surmounted by a number of quaint towers, some square, others octagonal, finished with bell shaped domes and soaring spires. These appear no bigger than toys by contrast with the pine-clad mountains, that stretch in a formidable rampart across the background, as though in derision of the puny efforts of kings. Wings project at either side. The one to west is apportioned among various court officials.

As I was about to pass to the grounds on the south I was stopped by a bemedalled official, evidently an old soldier, in a blue and scarlet uniform, who directed me to apply for a "Permission" at the Administracion situated in the west wing of the Palace. Here, in a department which displayed the number 17 over its door, I was required to write my name in a book. After a wait of some twenty minutes I was given a card, which bore a crown and coat of arms, and entitled "Mr. Lt. Colonel Newell" to visit "the grounds of the Royal Seat of San Ildefonso."

Thus equipped I passed unchallenged to the strange and magnificent solitude of the vast pleasance planned by Philip V whose ambition it was to eclipse the glories of Versailles. To this end he summoned Spanish, French and Italian artists to co-operate in devising fountains, groups of statuary, grottoes and walks on a truly stupendous scale. They survive to this day, infinitely splendid and unspeakably sad, with a brooding melancholy too deep, and too tragic for tears.

The site was originally occupied by the old Chateau of Valsain, a favourite summer resort of Philip II. Here, on August 12th, 1566, his third wife, Isabel de Valois, gave birth to a daughter, the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenie, heiress of the Netherlands. Philip married for a fourth time in 1570, whereupon he presented Valsain to his bride, Anna of Austria. It was burnt down on April 11th, 1697. Four years later Philip V despatched the Count of Belmonte to consider the question of rebuilding. As a result Teodoro Ardemans, the son of a German in the King's Bodyguard, was commanded to draw up the plans of the present palace. Subsequently it was the scene of Philip's abdication in favour of his son Louis I. It was likewise witness to the act whereby Ferdinand VII revived the Salic Law, and acknowledged his brother, Don Carlos, heir to the throne, hence the Carlist Wars, which

brought such misery upon Spain after his death. Unfortunately much of the palace was gutted by fire in January, 1978, although no hint of this transpires from outside.

The wonderful gardens lie to the south and occupy three hundred and fifty acres. Seen from this side the royal residence is a long two storeyed building of pinkish yellow stone with closely set windows flanked by Corinthian columns. The lower row are barred with iron, and the upper display small projecting balconies of decorative metal work. The façade rises in the centre, where it is ornamented with figures, coats of arms and royal crowns. In front stretches a broad walk, whence a wide water channel penetrates deep into the woods, rising in ten terraces to a magnificent cascade which sparkles in the sunshine with the brilliance of a gigantic diamond. At either side stand white statues of gods, goddesses and forest nymphs. Everywhere walks strike among the trees. Low pillars support baskets and bowls of fruit, the whole modelled in metal and coloured red in perfect simulation of coral. Groups of dogs attacking deer, startled marble fauns and quaint mythological personages preside over alabaster fountains, or start from the dark shade of pines.

A sylvan glade is encircled by eight immense white arches, each of which enshrines a group of statuary, and a fountain playing above a pool of black and white marble. A sheet of jade green water sparkles in the centre presided over by Pan, who stands on a rocky eminence of snowy marble and rose coloured stone playing his flute to a crowd of listening sea gods, drawn from the liquid depths by the magic of his music.

Every opening in the trees frames a majestic view of mountains rising, range upon range, to a sky of mottled silver and azure. The solitude is oppressive, almost terrifying. Unconsciously I quickened my step eager to escape from those endless avenues, and their dread silence. It was a relief, at last, to sight the pink face of the palace, and better still to see the reassuring blue and red uniform, and the many medals, of the old soldier at the gate. I was conscious of a warm increase of sympathy for all humanity, hence it was sheer joy to encounter a party of ladies, gloved and hatted as though in Madrid, on their way to pay their respects to the Infanta Isabella, aunt of the King, who was spending the summer in the Palace. With a shudder I declined an invitation to view the royal tombs in the gloomy Church. My spirit craved sunshine and the companionship of the living as never before.

CHAPTER XVIII

VALLADOLID

ANY, and everyone can appreciate Segovia. Valladolid is for the epicure. Amid much that is modern, sordid and commonplace lurk historic sites, ancient buildings and richly carved fragments of rare interest, but they require looking for, and they need knowing.

A crowded rapido, carrying only first class passengers, whirled me to the one time capital of Castile in a little over three hours. My first impression of the ancient city, styled Pincio by the Romans, was disappointing. I had expected mediæval ramparts, their foundations deeply laid in classic history, a castle on a height, the commanding towers and swelling blue tiled domes of a palace worthy to be the birth-place of Philip II ; the lordly outline of the mansion in which the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, were married in haste and secretly, by the masterful prelate who, when subsequently vexed with the Queen, declared that, as he had freed her from the distaff, so would he send her back to it again.

As a matter of fact I saw none of these things. From the train window Valladolid appears a rather shabby manufacturing town set in the midst of a featureless plain. Lacking alike in dignity and distinction it lies under a cloud of smoke. Nothing could be less inspiring, or less heroic, yet here Cervantes wrote the first part of "Don Quixote," and here Christopher Columbus died.

As the omnibus rattled over the cobble stones I viewed, with evaporating enthusiasm, a succession of uninteresting streets, and monotonous squares seemingly modelled on the lines of a French ville de province.

Despite foreign influence Valladolid is essentially Spanish at heart. This is proved by the Plaza de la Constitucion, better known by its old name of Plaza Mayor, a great central square watched over by the dignified Casa Consistorial, an

edifice bearing a marked family resemblance to similar municipal buildings in other parts of the Peninsula. All around stretch four storeyed grey houses, shops and cafés with shelving roofs of terra cotta tiling, balconies and a continuous arcade of massive stone.

In mediæval Spain the Plaza Mayor was the theatre wherein royal pageants took place, public executions, festivities, tournaments and proclamations. It was the civic heart of the city, hence the consternation felt when it was burnt down in the great fire of 1561. The conflagration began at a silversmith's in the Plateria on Sunday, September 21st, and continued to rage for thirty hours. Every effort was made to combat the flames. The entire body of clergy marched in solemn procession from the Cathedral to the Church of San Lorenzo. Furthermore a propitiatory altar was erected in the Plazuela Ochavo.

Philip II was much concerned at the damage to his native city. By his command the work of rebuilding the Plaza Mayor started in the October immediately following the catastrophe, and was prosecuted with the utmost despatch. Many a time and oft the windows and balconies, which are said to accommodate twenty-four thousand spectators, were bravely dressed with banners and gold embroidered hangings in honour of bull fights and autos de fé. The latter were tragically frequent during the reign of Philip II who, on October 8th, 1559, assisted at one on an especially splendid scale, when, noble though he was, Don Carlos de Sese perished in the flames, together with a number of other Protestant heretics.

Where the dread fires of the Inquisition once crackled and flared now stands a tall pedestal adorned with a statue of Don Pedro Ansurez, the doughty knight who received the city from Alfonso VI. after its capture from the Moors. Historians of Valladolid dwell with unconcealed satisfaction upon the pedigree of this, the first Christian Alcade of their venerable capital. According to them he traced his descent from Astur, a Greek warrior present at the siege of Troy, who eventually settled in the Asturian mountains.

Don Pedro's prowess in the field of battle was equalled by his merits as a Governor, and his activity as an architect. Among the many buildings attributed to him is the bridge over the Pisuerga. He is also credited with founding the Churches of Santa Maria Antigua and Santa Maria la Mayor. The latter, with its monastery, was consecrated by the cele-

brated French prelate Bernard, Archbishop of Toledo. None but princes, or nobles of the highest rank might aspire to be Abbot thereof.

Near neighbour to the ancient Plaza Mayor is the equally historic Plazuela del Ochavo, a small octagonal space where four roads meet. A mural tablet, on one of the sombre encircling houses, states that Alvaro de Luna, Grand Constable of Castile, the once all powerful favourite of Juan II., was executed here in 1453. The spectacle was a memorable one and well attended. In the centre of the Plaza Valladolid, as it was then termed, rose a scaffold draped with black, and illuminated by tall wax tapers set in front of a lofty cross. A pike, affixed to a post near by, stood ready to receive the head of the noble who, for so many years, had been the virtual ruler of Castile. Mounted on a mule, caparisoned with funereal trappings, Alvaro de Luna was paraded slowly through the principal streets preceded by a herald, who loudly proclaimed the long list of crimes urged against the former Grand Constable. Near the Church of San Francisco, Alvaro dismounted. He ascended the scaffold with a firm step, knelt before the crucifix and made a brief address to the assembled crowd, wherein he referred to the ingratitude of kings. Then, searching the throng for a friendly face and espying only his weeping page, he handed him his signet ring in reward for that sympathy, which the humble alone have courage to openly express for the great of the earth, who have fallen from their high estate. Thereafter his hands were bound with his own girdle. A moment later the executioner held aloft the severed head, which remained exposed on a pike in the Plaza for nine days. Meanwhile the body lay with an alms box beside it. Into this the charitable dropped coins to defray the burial expenses. The first interment took place at San Andres outside the city. From there the Constable's remains were transferred to the Church of San Francisco, where they remained until finally placed in the Cathedral of Toledo. The inscription on the magnificent tomb, erected by the Constable's daughter, runs: "Here lies Don Alvaro de Luna, Master of Santiago, Constable of Castile, who after governing the realm for many years ended his days on July 17th, 1453." This date is disputed. The monkish chronicler Espina, in describing the event, states that de Luna was beheaded between 8 and 9 a.m. on the morning of Saturday, June 22nd.

Royal associations cling to the Plaza San Pablo, a great

open space surrounded by ancient buildings, each of which plays a notable part in history. It takes its name from the Dominican monastery founded in the thirteenth century by Queen Violante, consort of Don Alonso el Sabio. The yellow façade of the old Church is surely the most ornate, and fantastical ever devised even by a generation which treated granite as a precious stone, and exhausted the resources of human ingenuity in the manipulation thereof. Every inch is crowded with carved saints, crowns, armorial bearings, angels holding escutcheons, prelates and royal personages enshrined under tapering Gothic canopies of such exquisitely fine workmanship as almost to suggest petrified lace, or filigree. An effective contrast is provided by plain twin belfries of whitish stone, which stand, post like, at either side. The low wide door, of three graduated arches, is surmounted by an elaborate relief of the Coronation of the Madonna attended by Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, who restored the body of the Church and the Capilla Mayor, in 1463. He was closely related to the celebrated Tomas de Torquemada, likewise a native of Valladolid, the Confessor of Ferdinand and Isabella and the first Grand Inquisitor of Spain. Prominence is given to the arms of Don Francisco de Rejas y Sandaval, first Duke of Lorma, the favourite of Philip III who, wearying of the world, was received into the Church. He expended sixty thousand ducats upon improving San Pablo, and a further thirty thousand ducats in providing choir stalls of various woods from the Indies. Such piety deserved recognition, accordingly he received the Cardinal's hat in 1618.

The interior of the Church is now somewhat bare having been wrecked by French troops in the Napoleonic war. The lofty ceiling is bright with azure and gold, and the brilliant colours of numerous escutcheons. A deep upper gallery projects for a considerable distance over the lower end. Beautiful doors mark either extremity of the transept. That, on the right, leads into a large and splendid chapel, the most noteworthy features of which are the gallery, ceiling and tall pulpit.

The Cortes used to meet in the Church, which has witnessed many notable ceremonies including the interment of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, the requiem mass of Juan II who died in the adjacent monastery, the baptism of Philip II and the burial of his infant brother, Don Juan. The latter prince was born in the mansion of Don Francisco de los Cobos, afterwards the Royal Palace and now the residence of the Captain

General, a long yellow building with a square *mirador* at either angle, situated on the opposite side of the Plaza looking towards San Pablo. Napoleon is reputed to have made it his headquarters when in Valladolid.

Near by, at the corner of the square, and of the Calle de las Augustias stretches a red brick building with projecting iron balconies and square granite towers. A mural tablet states that Philip II was born here on May 21st, 1527. At that date the mansion belonged to the Count of Rivadavia, who had purchased it from the original owner, Don Bernadino Pimental. It is built about four sides of a palm planted patio encircled by stone verandas with mouldy Corinthian pillars, and is at present utilised as the Deputacion Provincial.

To North of San Pablo lies the venerable College of San Gregorio founded by Alonso de Burgos, in turn Bishop of Cordova, Cuenca and Palencia. Queen Isabella, the Catholic, whose confessor he was, became patroness of the College, a building famed throughout the peninsula for the beauty and elaboration of its decorative carving. Commenced in 1488 it was finished in 1496. The architect, Mattias Carpontero, never saw the completion of the work as, for some mysterious reason, he committed suicide while it was still in progress. His portal rivals that of San Pablo. The entire façade is peopled with pontiffs, prelates, warriors in full armour, saints and cherubs. Among the goodly throng a pomegranite tree, emblem of the vanquished Moor, spreads its branches, whence blossom lions and the arms of the Catholic Sovereigns and the founder, Bishop Alonso.

The sombre entrance hall is graced by stone pillars, their capitals adorned with the Bishop's hat, and coat of arms, a shield displaying a fleur de lys and four crowns. Within lies a large square flagged patio surrounded by remarkably carved cloisters and an upper gallery, its frieze decorated with Ferdinand's yoke and Isabella's sheaf of arrows. Protruding gargoyles take the form of dogs, monkeys, eagles, demons and similar fantastic figures. Wonderful and intricate sculpture covers the walls of the grand staircase under a coloured and gilt ceiling of the favourite Moorish star design. The upper gallery is supported by pillars and arches of lace-like sculpture. The wooden ceiling glows with soft blues and reds below a roof of brilliant vermilion hued tiling.

No words could express the beauty and the charm of this old world college. It almost inspires a regret that Science should have promoted man from the stately leisure and endur-

ing grace of the stone age, to the fret and smoke and grime of an iron era, the presiding deity whereof is a machine made idol uplifted on a sordid altar inscribed Commerce, on which the votaries of progress offer the superhuman sacrifice of their ideals.

The unfinished Cathedral is a great stone pile of austere grandeur. It stands on the site of the ancient Gothic Church of Santa Maria Mayor, originally erected by Pedro de Ansurez, who was buried in the choir, and in which Pedro the Cruel was married to his luckless wife, the ill fated Blanche de Bourbon, whom he abandoned three days after the ceremony to return to Maria de Padilla. The foundation stone of the present edifice was laid on June 13th, 1527. The design of the upper portion is of a later date having been entrusted to Juan de Herrera, architect of the Escorial. Known, at first, by its old name of Iglesia Mayor, it was raised to the dignity of a Cathedral on November 15th, 1595. Don Bartolome de la Plaza was the first Bishop. It is entered from the south-west by a plain square portal flanked by two pairs of smooth rounded columns, and surmounted by the statues of four prelates. The effect of the interior is very sober. Light is admitted by clear glass windows. The Coro is of unadorned grey stone. Heavy arches, springing from large angular piers, characterise the three aisles. The lofty ceiling is coated with whitewash. Amid the prevailing neutral tones the gold of the high altar shines out like sunshine. Near the door of the Sagraria is the tomb of Pedro de Ansurez, whose statue adorns the Plaza de la Constitucion. The doughty knight lies stretched on his coffin lid, a bearded figure clad, from head to foot, in the good coat of mail, in which he dealt many a mortal blow to the Infidel. His helmet is of classical Greek design in compliment, no doubt, to his illustrious ancestor present at the siege of Troy.

The east side, upon which work was abandoned at a comparatively early stage, looks out across the tree planted square of the University. In the centre rises the bronze statue of Cervantes, a courtier-like figure in the dress of the seventeenth century.

Valladolid dates its Studium General from the thirteenth century. Later on, in 1347, Alfonso XI procured a papal bull granting it the official status of a University. Thereafter it acquired considerable distinction as a seat of light and learning. John II founded a Chair of Theology and other sovereigns bestowed many marks of favour upon it. The

terrace, in front, is outlined with stone pillars topped by lions holding escutcheons. More curious still is the effect achieved by the row of kingly patrons lined up along the edge of the roof. The fact that the monarchs in question are clad in full armour suggests that, in their opinion, the sword was mightier than the pen.

The façade is smothered in carved figures, crowns and coats of arms, and pierced by a metal door set between two pairs of tall Corinthian columns.

A short walk leads to the Calle Colon, a wide and rather broad street paved with the accustomed cobble stones, which cause the foot sore pedestrian to sigh for the horny hoofs of the much privileged goat. Down one side stretches a long barn-like yellow building with a projecting tiled roof, irregular window openings and insignificant arched door. Here, in a poor inner room, the discoverer of the New World breathed his last, a pauper and disgraced, on Ascension Day, 1506, in the capital of the very monarchs by whom he had been created an Admiral and Viceroy in return for the gift of a continent.

Christopher Columbus had made his fourth and final voyage to America in 1502, returning thence in November 1504, the very month in which his patroness, Isabella, had died at Medina del Campo. He left two sons, Fernando and Diego, ancestor of the Dukes of Veragua.

At the further end of the Calle stands the old brick Church of Santa Magdalena pierced by two arched doorways above which the entire façade is taken up by the coat of arms of the founder. This gigantic escutcheon is aptly described by Street, as the ne plus ultra of heraldic absurdity. The interior contains the tomb of the celebrated Bishop Pedro de la Casca, to whom the Spanish crown was indebted for the recovery of Peru from the rebel, Pizarro.

As befits so ancient and historical a city Valladolid possesses a museum. This is situated in the old Convent of Santa Cruz once pertaining to the Order of San Santiago. It was founded in 1489 by two sisters, Dona Maria de Zurugia and Dona Maria de Fonseca, and consists of a square building of drab coloured stone, the flat roof surrounded by Gothic pinnacles. The arched portal is surmounted by a relief depicting Cardinal Pedro Mendoza on his knees before a crucifix upheld by St. Helena. Above is an iron balcony and the usual lavish display of armorial bearings. The Cardinal's name is repeated on an inner arch together with the date 1491.

Within lies a quiet tree planted square, so hushed and still

that time itself seems to have fallen asleep. Above it rise two sculptured stone galleries, the window spaces filled in with glass. The walls of the cloister are lined with pictures, one of which represents the burning of the rival books of ritual in the reign of Alfonso VI. The east side contains a quantity of carved wooden groups gorgeously coloured and gilt in the rich deep tones favoured by mediæval artists. Particularly fine are the Interment of Christ, by Juan de Juni (1507-77) and the stages of the Cross, by Fernandez. A faithful reproduction of a skeleton in wood is uncannily realistic. In a room by itself is the Crucified Cristo de la Luz, by Fernandez, a terrible portrayal of a bleeding tortured figure.

The many carvings represent the spoils of a number of ancient churches, notably the choir stalls from San Benito el Real, the famous monastery erected by John I on the site of the Moorish Alcazar as an act of atonement for the damage done to religious institutions during the fratricidal wars between his father Henry II of Trastamara, and Pedro the Cruel. Nothing could be more elaborate than the stalls, the work of Berruguete. Each Abbot is represented by his arms carved on the back of his particular chair, as are various sovereigns of the Trastamara line, beginning with Henry II. Above stretches a wonderful frieze depicting historical scenes peopled by the great of the earth, over a quaint band of frolicsome cupids. The further end of the gallery contains two life sized gilt effigies of Catalina de la Cerda, Duchess of Lerma and of the Duke, by Leoni, a native of Milan, who died at Madrid in 1608. The figures were brought from tombs in San Pablo. Upstairs are yet more marvellous groups of wooden statuary. Among the most noted works is the head of St. Paul. The expression of pain on the face causes an involuntary shudder. The many altar pieces are extraordinarily rich and varied. They testify, in eloquent fashion, to the wealth of the innumerable religious institutions which flourished in Valladolid during the Middle Ages.

Another relic of the past is the dear old house in which Cervantes wrote the first part of "Don Quixote," hence it may aptly be termed the birthplace of that mirror of chivalry, the good knight of la Mancha. Situated on the south side of the Calle de Miguel Iscar it stands back from that busy thoroughfare behind a garden. Of red brick, with a projecting tiled roof, it is three storeys in height. Steps lead down to the front door. The interior contains a number of irregular rooms paved with red brick, the ceilings characterised by

deep cross beams. The kitchen is upstairs ; a truly delightful apartment containing a raised hearth but no fireplace, a hole in the ceiling serving as chimney. In one of the adjoining chambers hangs a painting of the battle of Lepanto in which Cervantes lost an arm. At the back is a tiny garden of prim box hedges watered by an old stone well, the high encircling walls smothered in ivy and passion flowers.

To the lover of history the most significant building in Valladolid is the Chancelleria situated in the one time mansion of Juan de Vivero, a large two storeyed pink edifice, its many windows framed in white stone adorned with carved reliefs. A mural tablet states how here, on October 19th, 1469, Dona Isabel of Castile was married to Don Ferdinand of Aragon. Few unions have exercised so important and widespread an influence. Isabella was eighteen at the time and Ferdinand a year younger. Disguised as merchants, the seventeen year old bridegroom and his suite reached Valladolid on the night of the fifteenth, when he had his first interview with his bride. The wedding took place four days later. This speed and secrecy were rendered necessary by the hostile attitude of Isabella's half brother, Henry IV who would have prevented the match had he known of it.

The Royal Audiencia, or Chancelleria of Valladolid was the chief Court of Justice in the realm. Established in 1405 it was presided over by the monarch in person. In 1494 Ferdinand and Isabella supplemented it by a second, which they first set up at Ciudad Real but soon transferred to Granada. The Tagus formed the boundary line between the two jurisdictions.

• Among the many moribund colleges of the one time capital British interest centres in those of Los Ingleses and Los Escoseses. The former was founded by Philip II as the result of the capture, in 1589, of four Englishmen in Valladolid and three in Burgos. As at that epoch the coasts of Spain and Portugal were being harassed by an English fleet, the presumption was that the seven foreigners were spies. Investigation proved them to be Catholic refugees from Protestant persecution, who had come to Spain to study for the priesthood. Touched by the tale, which was reported to him by a Jesuit named Roberto Porsonio, Philip II founded the existing English Theological College, at Valladolid, in 1590.

On the last evening of my stay I was so fortunate as to witness an imposing procession in honour of Our Lady of Carmen. Trams were held up and all traffic suspended. From

windows and balconies hung gay draperies in red and yellow, the Spanish colours. The lengthy cortège was headed by diminutive choir boys in long scarlet robes under surplices of white lawn and lace. They were followed by banners, and carved wooden groups of holy figures culminating in an immense illuminated statue of the Madonna. Behind paced the white haired Archbishop, a gorgeous figure in brilliant vermillion, his train upheld by two priests. The rear was brought up by civic dignitaries, a military band and company of soldiers. At either side walked black clad women, and girls, wearing mantillas and carrying tall lighted tapers. The effect of the long lines of sombre figures, flickering candles and resplendent vestments, winding through the narrow streets, and round the old Plaza Mayor, was most picturesque and romantic.

CHAPTER XIX

BURGOS

IT is in the great moments of life that men reveal themselves. Joy and sorrow are alike touchstones of character. If the same rule applies to cities I may claim to have arrived at Burgos at a singularly opportune time. The old Castilian capital was in festal mood. Preparations were in full swing for celebrating the seven hundredth birthday of the Cathedral. The King and Queen were expected. Visitors poured in by road and rail. Hotel keepers were reaping a rich harvest of crisp notes and heavy silver five peseta pieces. Even the beggars had put up their prices. Where they had been content to request ten centimos, they now greeted the stranger with a demand for a peseta.

The centre of interest was, of course, the Cathedral. From early until late its lofty aisles echoed the ceaseless footfalls of a vast multitude. Hither came the pious, the curious, the vulgar sightseer and the mere tourist; the last named bewildered, and not a little disconcerted, at finding himself in such a throng. Prince, peer, priest and peasant rubbed shoulders with democratic impartiality, for it is a characteristic of great moments that social distinctions, like other artificialities, are temporarily suspended. Every morning High Mass was celebrated by a brilliant company of Cardinals and Bishops in the presence of a large congregation. Not only Castile, but the whole of Spain and South America had gathered to honour the most beautiful Cathedral in the Peninsula. Its incomparable spires constitute a familiar landmark, and are the first objects to catch the eye as the train approaches the mediæval city on the hill.

The Gothic style of architecture was introduced from France in the twelfth century. It is seen at its best in the great cathedrals of Burgos, Leon and Toledo. All three are magnificent. Burgos, however, is generally acclaimed as the finest of the imposing architectural trio. It was founded, on July 20th, 1221, by King Ferdinand III better known as San

Fernando, assisted by Bishop Maurice, an English prelate who had accompanied Eleanor Plantagenet, daughter of Henry II of England, on her bridal journey to Castile, where she became Queen Consort of Alfonso VIII.

The splendid fane occupies the site of an earlier Church built in 1075 above the remains of the summer palace of Fernan Gonzalez, the first Count of Castile to establish the independence of the province destined to become a kingdom and pre-eminent in the Peninsula.

The unrivalled twin spires, flanking the main entrance, date from 1442. They are the design of Hans of Cologne, a wonder worker, who handled granite as though it were ivory, and succeeded in erecting lofty transparent belfries seemingly lined with the blue of the sky. So fragile do they look that it appears as though a gust of wind must inevitably shatter the airy fabric. By day the sun shines through them. At night the silver radiance of the moon throws into white relief the myriad intricacies, and cunning imaginings of Gothic fantasy. The bewitched spectator is drawn, with irresistible lure, back into those mysterious centuries, those gorgeously coloured and gilt middle ages whereof his waking memory is but dimly conscious as of things belonging to a far off, forgotten childhood, or a dream.

The façade looks west on to an irregular sloping court planted with acacias about a quaint old fountain, which plays into a deep octagonal basin enlivened by sportive cherubs astride on dolphins. Lesser doors open to right and left of the Puerta Principal. Pointed arches surmount the three. Statues of Ferdinand III, Alfonso VI, and of the Bishops Maurice and de Oca guard the central entrance. Above is a splendid rose window. Higher still a row of eight crowned figures stretch below two Gothic casements, their light obscured by a wealth of stone fretwork of lace like intricacy. Above all is a spirited representation of St. James, patron saint of Spain, mounted on the phantom charger wherewith he led the Christian hosts to victory. The portals, on either side, are surmounted by the indescribably beautiful belfries designed by Hans of Cologne.

The Cathedral is usually entered from the north by La Puerta de la Pellejería, so called from its position at the end of the street of the Furriers. Once inside it is impossible to repress an exclamation of wonder and admiration. Everything that had gone before seemed but a prelude leading up to this inexpressibly marvellous finale.

The coro is entirely enclosed. A magnificent railing of heavily gilt metal shuts off the centre of the wide transept and imprisons the Capilla Mayor. In no other Spanish Cathedral are the congregation so completely excluded from participating in the service, glimpses of which are caught between the intervening bars.

The front and sides of the sanctuary are enclosed by pillars covered with carved figures and arabesques of infinite detail. The intervening spaces are filled by a superb bronze reja, or screen. Unfortunately the effect is marred by the stone dado which, though admirable in itself, has been spoiled by the application of red and yellow in tawdry imitation of marble. The desire to "gild the lily and paint the rose" seems inherent in Spanish decorators.

Steps lead up to the high altar, behind which the retablo rises in a series of small shrines filled with coloured and gilt wooden figures, the work of sixteenth century artists. In honour of the Cathedral's seventh centenary two splendid canopies had been erected at either side. That on the left shed a stately crimson glow over the Cardinal's chair. Exactly opposite stood the thrones of the King and Queen, a prayer desk in front of each, whereon reposed large cushions of scarlet velvet heavily tasselled with gold. The remainder of the Capilla Mayor was filled with seats reserved for the clergy, many hundreds of whom had come to Burgos for the occasion.

The Cathedral was to celebrate its birthday by an imposing religious service, at which seven bishops would assist, on the morning of July 20th. and—strange incongruity—by a bull fight in the afternoon. The most interesting and dramatic ceremony, however, was reserved for the twenty first. On that date the remains of the Cid and of his wife, the hardly less celebrated Ximena, were to be conveyed, in solemn procession, from their temporary resting place in the Town Hall, and buried in the vault at that moment awaiting their reception in the transept of the Cathedral. Together with a silent, and respectful throng I looked down at the gaping space in the pavement destined for Spain's national hero, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar known, the world over, by the title bestowed on him alike by friend and foe of el Cid Campeador. (The Lord Champion)

The grave of the mighty warrior lies in the centre of the transept at the foot of the sculptured sarcophagus above which stretches the green bronze effigy of Bishop Maurice. High

overhead soars the peerless lantern of the great sixteenth century tower raised by the genius of Felipe de Bobadilla. It so impressed Philip II that he exclaimed it appeared the work of angels rather than of men. The four immense supporting piers are divided into four courses. The lowest is decorated with heraldic devices and the next by saints in canopied shrines. A line of diminutive carved heads divides the second from the third tier, which is similarly adorned with holy personages in Gothic niches. The top of each mighty column is in the form of a figure with arms upraised as though to hold the superstructure which is lighted by two rows of large clear glass windows under a star shaped roof studded with glittering gilt motifs.

The northern end of the transept terminates in a splendid branching staircase of diamond form, conspicuous for the beauty of its gilt banisters. Known as the Golden Staircase it leads up to the so called Puerta de la Corazona a thirteenth century portal opening on to the street here twenty five feet above the level of the Cathedral floor. The southern extremity of the transept is illuminated by a beautiful rose window, which deserves special notice as containing the only antique stained glass in the building. The rest was shattered by an explosion in the Castle caused by the French previous to their evacuation of it in 1813.

To west stretches the choir enclosed by high walls lined with a hundred and three stalls ranged in double tiers. Walnut and boxwood are the two varieties employed in their construction. The smooth highly polished seats are adorned with marqueterie work, the inlaid figures representing a host of local subjects of unblushingly pagan origin, in strange and fantastical contrast to the crowd of holy personages from the New Testament, who occupy every inch of the carved upper portion.

The exterior of the coro displays Corinthian pillars, and marble shrines hung with oil paintings depicting Elijah being fed by the ravens, and other Biblical subjects. Carved escutcheons, surmounted by the Cardinal's hat, bear two ships in commemoration, doubtless, of the fleet furnished to San Fernando by Admiral Ramon Bonifacio, a native of Burgos, whose navy enabled the Castilian monarch to take Seville from the Moors.

High up under the lofty roof, near the principal entrance, a quaint old chiming clock attributed to the fifteenth century. Every hour and every half hour the mechanical

figure of a man pops forward and rings a bell, a curiosity which no guide deserving of the name will fail to point out to the visitor, no matter what else he may omit.

The first chapel, to north of the main door, is dedicated to Santa Tecla. It is very large, and is remarkable for the elaborate carving of its brilliantly coloured and gilt ceiling. Opposite the gorgeous retablo is a big twelfth century font, the rim decorated with a deeply cut border of primitive, yet involved design.

The adjoining chapel of St. Ana illustrates the Spanish passion for genealogy in curious fashion. Over the altar, in white marble, is the family tree of Christ. The recumbent form of Abraham lies stretched across the foot. From the patriarch's fertile bosom springs a lordly tree of many branches. Immediately above him stand Isaac and Sarah. Higher still is the Virgin. Finally the Saviour appears against a background of bright celestial blue spangled with stars, and the shining golden faces of the sun and moon. In the ambulatory, immediately behind the High Altar, the wall is decorated with a magnificent series of reliefs of the Passion, by Philip Vigarni, or de Borgogna as he is popularly styled, in which the artist treats the familiar subject with intense dramatic power. The first panel depicts the Saviour at Gethsemane. An Angel, cross in hand, tenders him the chalice, while a company of Roman soldiers, armed with pikes, advance to arrest him, passing, on their way, the recumbent forms of the sleeping Apostles. A crowded scene represents the bearing of the Cross. Each face in the multitude is expressive of one or other of the human passions, pity, vulgar curiosity, hatred, jubilation, and so on. The sculptor reaches his greatest height in the Calvary. The writhing tortured forms of the thieves are in striking contrast to the patient acceptance of martyrdom expressed in the beautiful Central Figure which, in its calm, is eloquent of that intensity of suffering whereof the poet sings, "The mark of rank in nature is capacity for pain." The Descent from the Cross is slightly mutilated. The Sculptor passes thence to the triumphant ante-climax of the Ascension.

To east lies the splendid Capilla del Condestable, a church in itself and a very rich and magnificent one at that. Chief among the many objects of interest are the tombs of the founder of the mortuary chapel, Don Pedro Fernandez Velasco, Constable of Castile, and of his spouse, Dona Mencia de Mendoza, Condeza de Haro, obit 1500. The latter has her

little dog carved at her feet. The offices of Constable and Almirante were respectively held by the heads of the Castilian Army and Navy. Gradually they came to be regarded as hereditary, the former in the family of Velasco, and the latter in that of the Enriquez. The Condestable's Chapel is now the property of the Duke of Frias, the present representative of the Velascos. The first Duchess of Frias was a natural daughter of Ferdinand the Catholic. Her mother was from Catalonia and, tradition asserts with a candour that puts scandal to the blush, accompanied her kingly lover on all his many campaigns against the Moor in the romantic disguise of a squire.

A wonderful old doorway leads into the spacious thirteenth century cloisters replete with links with bygone generations, until every footfall seems an echo of the past. Over the ancient portal dead hands have carved a fearful warning and a promise of salvation. Christ is represented rescuing souls from hell, the gate of which takes the form of the yawning jaws of a dragon. The cloisters are lined with sculptured figures, among them that of San Fernando, and the effigies of mitred prelates, rigid and stiff, on the lids of their narrow stone coffins. In honour of the Cathedral's birthday the glories of graven princes and bishops are temporarily concealed beneath splendid tapestries of immense size woven, surely, by giants. Subjects sacred and profane are depicted with the impartiality of the true artist. The love story of Anthony and Cleopatra hangs side by side with the edifying slaughter of Goliath by David. Another vast piece represents the war between virtue and vice, the hosts of the former lead by Christ, in shining armour, a crown of thorns about his helmet.

Another fine portal marks the entrance to the Chapel of Santa Catalina, where, of old, synods and provincial councils were held. This contains a great silver car, the size of a wagon, used at Corpus Cristo. Even the solid wheels are of the same precious metal, as is the figurehead in front, part angel and part merman, with its wings and long fish tail.

The casual visitor does not loiter but hastens to the Capilla de Corpus Cristi where, high up on the stone wall, a rusty chain, and two iron supports hold the famous coffer of the Cid.

The celebrated wooden chest, wherewith the national hero played his memorable practical joke upon the Jews, is about five feet long and half that in width. The worm eaten planks are stoutly clamped with iron. Three formidable locks fasten the arched lid. Altogether it must have looked a very solid,

spirited Dona Ximena. At the earliest opportunity she appeared before the Court held by King Ferdinand I and, falling on her knees, made a demand which rings curiously in modern ears. She desired that the sovereign should give her as wife to Rodrigo de Bivar, stating, as reason, that she knew he would rise to be the greatest warrior in Castile, when she would be able to forgive him freely. The youthful couple were accordingly married in the royal castle a little lower down the hill. As the world renowned el Cid Campeador, Don Rodrigo de Bivar fully justified his wife's optimistic prophecy concerning his future career.

The castle has almost disappeared. The desolate site is still guarded by extensive walls of irregular stone strengthened by protruding bastions. They are traversed by the high road which passes through the Arco de San Martin, a fine old gateway remarkable for a horseshoe arch of typical Moorish design.

The one time formidable citadel dates back to the latter half of the ninth century at which epoch Burgos was the capital of that debatable land between Christian and Moor, a territory perpetually fluctuating between allegiance to the Cross and Crescent. It was governed by vassal Counts appointed by the King of Leon. Owing to the constant threat of invasion castles sprung up on all sides, hence the name of Castile by which it came to be known. As their power increased the Counts of Burgos, an office which had gradually become hereditary, aspired to sovereign independence. A declaration to this effect was wrested from Leon, by Fernan Gonzalez, Count of Castile under whose descendant, Ferdinand I, the crowns of Leon and Castile were united. The Castle constituted their principal residence until Alfonso VI transferred his capital to Toledo. Even so it continued to be the scene of many historical events, among others the wedding of Prince Edward of England with "The Good Queen Eleanor," Infanta of Castile, on October 18th, 1254. During the Peninsular War it was garrisoned by the French, and repulsed repeated attacks by the Duke of Wellington, in 1812.

From the Castle, in which the Cid was married, and the site of the house in which he was born, I retraced my steps to the dim old church of Santa Agueda. Here the nobles of Castile, headed by the Cid, forced Alfonso VI to swear that he was innocent of his brother, King Sancho's murder before they would take the oath of allegiance to him as successor to the throne thus tragically vacated.

" At Santa Agueda of Burgos
Did the hidalgos swear,
Of brother's blood, the clearing oath,
Alfonso must take here.

" The good Cid tendered it—
That good Castilian brave—
Upon the iron bolt
And on the arblast's stave."

Outside the entrance, high upon the nearest buttress to right, the visitor is shown a small iron cross, and told that it is the one upon which the King was required to take the celebrated oath. The interior of the Church is long narrow and dark. To south of the main altar a niche in the wall contains the tomb of the founder and his wife surmounted by their effigies. On the north wall a coloured and gilt relief, depicting the Adoration of the Magi, has every appearance of extreme antiquity.

The Ayuntamiento overlooks the Plaza Mayor, a large pentagonal opening planted with trees, and surrounded by the usual arcades, flat faced houses of uniform design and shops. A statue of Charles III, by Tome, occupies the centre. On Monday, July 18th the iron balconies of the Town Hall were gay with hangings of cherry colour and gold. The great red and yellow standard of Spain showed bravely in the brilliant sunshine above the crowned head of Fernan Gonzalez carved over the entrance. White marble stairs led up to a landing adorned with an immense oil painting of the Cid, in full armour, mounted upon his charger, the valiant Babieca. An elderly custodian greeted me respectfully with that additional shade of deference inspired by the possibility of "entertaining an angel unawares" for, at that moment, Burgos was bristling with notabilities. Guided by him I traversed a succession of small rooms and large salons resplendent with brocade, gilding, painted ceilings and historical pictures. One showed Dona Ximena on her knees before King Ferdinand, and another the Cid flinging the blood stained head of Count Lonzano at his father's feet.

At length we reached a narrow apartment stretching in front of the Chapel. Against the wall stood a high curiously shaped chest of light coloured wood polished until it gleamed with the brilliancy of a mirror. Inside lay the bones of the Cid. The custodian produced a key, unlocked it and raised the lid. For a moment I held my breath, a prey to unexpected

emotion. At that instant the custodian was called away. I was alone with the Cid.

The upper part of the chest contained a shallow fitted tray formed into two compartments by a division down the centre. It was doubly protected, first by a wire netting, and then by a sheet of plate glass. On one side lay the bones of the Cid, each fragment carefully labelled. On the other were ranged those of his wife. They looked very brown and shrunken. It was a pity ever to have disturbed them. They should have lain in the quiet grave at San Pedro's in the resting place of his choice, to which his corpse was brought, in awful state, by many a long march from distant Valencia. The responsibility for removing his bones lies with General Thibaut. The French Commandant thought to popularise Napoleonic rule in Spain by transferring the mortal remains of the national hero to a stone sarcophagus in the Plaza Mayor. This design was never carried out.

The custodian returned, locked up the chest and led me to the copper casket destined to hold the bones of the Cid until the last trumpet sounds the reveille alike for great and small, heroes and humble folk. It is a plain, but very heavy copper trunk weighing eighty kilos and fastening with three locks. Down the centre is a division. One side is reserved for the Cid. The other for Ximena, his partner in life and death.

Hardly had I gazed my last than a little group of Spanish dignitaries arrived to transfer the remains from the wooden chest to the copper case, in which they were ultimately to be deposited in the vault in the Cathedral. By a curious chance mine were the last foreign eyes ever to look upon the Cid.

Near by is the Puerta Santa Maria, a splendid old gateway embellished and renovated by the city of Burgos as a triumphal arch in honour of Charles V of Austria, whose accession to the Spanish throne they had so long and fiercely resisted. In appearance it rather suggests a miniature castle with its flanking towers and four upper turrets. Of grey stone, weather stained a light brown in places, the façade is adorned with seven warrior figures representing Charles V, the Cid, Fernan Gonzalez and other Castilian heroes. High above, in a pointed shrine backed by the blue of the sky, are beautiful statues of the Madonna and the Child, while, on either side, press modern houses. The interior is pierced by a dark tunnel-like passage, whence steep and well worn stairs ascend to a series of three vaulted chambers now utilised as a Museum and filled with art treasures from suppressed churches

and monasteries. The first contains one of the most beautiful tombs in Spain, that of Don Juan Padilla, a youthful warrior of twenty who fell, mortally wounded, before the walls of Granada. The white alabaster effigy is by Gil de Siloe. Every detail of the rich and involved fifteenth century costume is faithfully reproduced by that skilled embroiderer of marble. A long mantle enriched with needlework falls over a tunic and coat of mail. Near by slumber a knight and his lady, also very fine examples of sepulchral art. The centre of the second room is entirely filled by yet a third superb tomb, that of Dona Maria Manuel, the splendour of whose armorial bearings must impress even the angels.

From here three steps lead up to an octagonal chamber. An inscription, above the door, announces that in the fourteenth century it was the Ayuntamiento, or Town Hall. A vestige of its former grandeur survives in the brilliant colour and gilding of its artesonado ceiling, and the paintings on its walls. Its principal contents are some very fine wooden reliefs from the suppressed Convent of the Merced, and curious old eleventh century bronzes and enamels of Byzantium workmanship, from Santo Domingo de Silos.

The old town hummed with bustle, life and excitement. Aeroplanes wheeled overhead. Toreros, in gaudy costumes, galloped over the cobblestones on the sorry nags upon which they were to figure in the bull ring. Troops of cavalry clattered past with flying pennants of red and yellow. Officers strode along in full uniform, the sunshine flashing and gleaming on their helmets of polished steel. Now and then a scarlet robed Cardinal might be seen alighting from his motor car at the foot of the Cathedral steps, where he was received by a waiting procession of priests and choir boys.

The most celebrated of the many lordly mansions, which still shed the heraldic splendour of their façades upon narrow sordid calle and dilapidated square, is the Casa del Cordón, the one time residence of the Great Constable of Castile, an office held by the Velazco family. It is a large fifteenth century stone edifice, the corners emphasised by square miradors conspicuous for fantastical parapets, and stands on the northern side of the Plaza de la Libertad, where the market is held. The inevitable display of coronets and armorial bearings above the inconspicuous main door is varied by the introduction of a knotted and twisted cord, emblematic of the girdle worn by St. Francis of Assisi, to whom the Velazcos were especially devoted. Inside, the

large tree planted patio is encircled by fine arcades. The capitals of the pillars, and the staircase are carved with foliage designs of filigree like delicacy, into which one can thrust the fingers, and feel the back of each raised leaf and slender stem.

Here Ferdinand and Isabella held their court. Hither came Christopher Columbus with rare and curious gifts from the New World on his return from his second voyage into the unknown. Here, in February 1512, after Isabella and Columbus had both passed to their rest, Ferdinand granted a patent authorising Juan Ponce de Leon, Governor of Porto Rico to fit out an expedition to search for the fabled Island of Binini, in the West Indies, where, according to repute, the fount of perpetual youth was to be found. As a result Leon discovered Florida, in April of the following year. He mistook it for an island and gave it the name which it bears to this day.

It was in the House of the Cordon that Philip the Handsome died on September 25th, 1506, leaving his wife, the mad Queen Juana at the mercy of her unscrupulous father, Ferdinand the Catholic.

It was early in the morning when I started to walk to Miraflores, the Carthusian Monastery founded by Juan II, the weak but well meaning monarch, who thus sought to atone for the execution of his favourite, Alvara de Luna, in the Plaza del Ochoavo, at Valladolid. After crossing the river the road pursues its course over a delightful tree shaded plain laid out with not one, but many magnificent avenues of poplars, elms, planes and chestnuts. After about half an hour it struck uphill to the right winding in and out amid the elms. Between their trunks yellow glimpses were caught of fields of ripening wheat. Midway the route was barred by a tall stone archway topped by a cross, its triangular pediment bearing the name Royal Park. This was the gate leading to the palatial hunting box erected by Henry III, which John II bestowed upon the Carthusians, whose high set yellow monastery, on the crest of the ridge, comes into sight a few minutes later. It was a very lonely, though romantic and beautiful walk. A brisk breeze was blowing. Every now and then the distant booming of guns, firing a salute, bespoke the arrival of yet another exalted personage in Burgos.

The first object to catch the eye is the Church, its roof outlined with gargoyles and Gothic pinnacles, and its general

design somewhat reminiscent of San Juan de los Reyes, in Toledo. Elms grow right up to its buttressed walls. In the clearing, before the door of the monastery, stands a very old fluted granite column, weather worn and dilapidated, its base covered with armorial bearings and its summit topped by a cross, a crucifix on one side, and the Madonna on the other. An arched doorway, surmounted by crowns and the royal arms, admits to a stone hall. From here a pointed portal, decorated with a relief of a monk in adoration before the Virgin and Child, leads into the brightest of old world cloisters, the stone walls enlivened by a dado and deep seats of brilliant yellow and blue tiling. The rose garden, in the centre, fills the air with fragrance, as though offering perfumed homage to the white figure of a Carthusian monk raised above the grey stone basin of the fountain in the middle.

The Church is entered through a series of pointed arches decorated with escutcheons, crowns and holy figures. Splendid metal screens, partially enamelled a bright shade of blue, and gilt, divide the interior into three sections. The first contains two rows of finely carved walnut wood choir stalls, and two painted and gilded altars. The square gate thence is surmounted by a wooden group of the Virgin and angels, and bears the inscription "Felix Coelli Porta." Beyond again are more stalls. A magnificent retablo rises behind the high altar in a series of gilt and coloured figures. In the centre is the crucified Christ, a pelican feeding her young on the top of the cross, while, below, kneel John II and his wife, Isabella of Portugal, mother of Isabella, the Catholic, Spain's most celebrated Queen. The gold used in the retablo was brought from the New World by Christopher Columbus.

Immediately in front of the high altar a wonderfully ornate metal railing surrounds the large star shaped tomb of King John and his wife. This is entirely of white marble and was executed by Gil de Siloe. Every inch is covered with the finest carving executed with such fidelity of detail that snails are introduced among the vine leaves of the border, together with tiny cherubs. Below are crowns, escutcheons and the cardinal virtues enthroned in Gothic shrines. On the top repose the stately forms of the King and Queen. He wears his royal diadem and a splendidly embroidered mantel. His long hair falls over his ears and the nape of his neck. The face is clean shaven with clear cut regular features marred by the heavy double chin of a voluptuary. The Queen lies on his left, an open book in her hand and a rosary.

She wears a high crown and a full cloak elaborately embroidered and jewelled. A low marble division separates the two figures. In a mural niche, by the Queen, is the beautiful kneeling effigy of her sixteen year old son, Alfonso, hero of the rebel coronation ceremony before the walls of Avila. A round fur cap, attached to a cord, hangs down his back over a mantle of state. Contemporaries believe that his premature death, in 1476, was due to poison. Isabella, his sister, took advantage of it to wrest the throne from the rightful heiress, her niece. On the wall, close by, is an authentic portrait of Isabella, consort of John II. She is depicted as having a full face, small oblique eyes, a protruding underlip and receding chin. Clearly she was not possessed of the strength of character which distinguished her celebrated daughter.

The adjacent chapel is remarkable for a life-like wooden statue of San Bruno, in the white habit of the Carthusian Order of which he was founder. It is by Manoel Pereira. As such it is one of the rare specimens of Portuguese art. Above it hangs a crucifix conspicuous for the vivid green tone of the Saviour's flesh.

In a room off the cloisters visitors are shown a model of the old deer park laid out by Henry III, now the domain of the monks, and another, of the cells of the monastery. Each brother is allotted two, an upper and a lower room, connected by a stair and sparingly furnished with the bare necessities of life.

A little below Miraflores the road branches off to the ancient Monastery of San Pedro de Cardena founded in Visigothic times. Two hundred of the order were massacred within its walls by Muhammedan raiders in the ninth century. Hither the Cid despatched his wife and children for safe keeping, when he was banished by Alfonso VI, and here his corpse was laid to rest. Near him, by his own wish, Babieca, his good steed, was buried deep.

Less romantically situated, but equally interesting is the famous Cistercian Convent of Santa Maria de las Huelgas founded in 1180 by Alfonso VIII and Queen Eleanor, daughter of Henry II of England. It belonged to the Order of St. Bernard and was the only abbey for women in Spain. The Abbess enjoyed extraordinary privileges, and was originally elected for life. Pope Sixtus V. reduced her term of office to three years. She styled herself prelatess with quasi episcopal jurisdiction and exercised temporal authority over the

vassals of her territory, granted licences for holy orders and pronounced decrees through her ecclesiastical judges.

The Convent lies about a mile from Burgos on the opposite side of the Arlanzon. As I crossed the stone bridge women were kneeling on the flat banks washing clothes, and little girls, in pink dresses, were paddling in the shallow stream. A pleasant poplar lined road leads to Las Huelgas, a big grey pile which shelters behind the church erected by San Fernando in 1299. On arrival I found three Jesuits awaiting admittance. Two were from the United States. The third hailed from the Basque provinces. Finally, on the stroke of 4 p.m., a man in a blue shirt appeared with a key and unlocked the church door. Immediately upon entering, a grated window, on the right, allowed a view of the long narrow nave filled with stone sarcophagi. Here sleep many kings and queens of Castile, notably Alfonso VIII and Eleanor Plantagenet, Queen Berenguela, the mother of San Fernando, Alfonso VII, who assumed the title of Emperor, and numerous others. The last royal personage to be interred within was Anna of Austria, daughter of Don John, the victor of Lepanto. The next screened casement looks into the cloistered choir of the nuns lined with splendidly carved stalls and hung with tapestries. Near by is the narrow sixteenth century octagonal pulpit of gilt wood covered with carvings of the Apostles and Doctors of Law. Curiously enough it is widely travelled, having figured among the Spanish exhibits at the World's Fair, Chicago. The wall behind it displays a large fresco of the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa won by Alfonso VIII. A copy of the Muhammadan standard captured on that glorious occasion hangs above the high altar.

It was at Burgos, curiously enough, that I saw my first bull fight. One was advertised for the Sunday afternoon of my arrival, and was regarded as a gala occasion, it being the opening event of a brilliant series in honour of the Cathedral's seventh centenary. A reserved seat had been procured for me in advance for seven and a half pesetas, by the hotel factotum, a particularly important and conspicuous character in all Spanish establishments of the kind. The daughter of the house, an amiable black haired, sloe eyed damsel, counselled me to go early to the Plaza de Toros. Other advice was tendered by a well known American artist: "Be sure and take some stimulant along! You'll need it," he said.

I'm afraid I disregarded the friendly warning. Not until after the event did I recognise its significance.

When I arrived the great round circus was practically empty. Open to the sky it was on the lines of a Roman amphitheatre, and rose in tier upon tier of receding stone seats, each of which commanded an equally good view of the arena. All were shadeless with the exception of those at the very top, where a tiled roof protected the gallery. Here was the royal box distinguished by its size, and its hangings of majenta and gold. On the following Wednesday it would be graced by the King and Queen. This particular afternoon the Captain General, the Military Commandant of the District, was to occupy it.

Far below, in the centre, lay the sand strewn ring surrounded by a wooden barrier pierced by wicket gates through which the combatants might escape, but the bull could not follow. Beyond ran a passage, some five feet wide, then a stone wall topped by a wooden pallisade painted in stripes of red and yellow, the Spanish colours. A number of attendants, clad in loose scarlet shirts and caps to match, stood about in this passage.

The seats began to fill. Those on the sunny side being the cheapest were not reserved, and were soon crowded. The Guardia Civile were well represented and were conspicuous figures in their trim grey and yellow uniforms and shiny black hats. Boys were noisily engaged in hiring out paper covered cushions, at a peseta a piece, for spectators to sit upon. The majority found the stone seats too hard for comfort. Parties of ladies appeared in the boxes in the gallery. Their presence lent a brilliant and exotic touch to a scene lit by dazzling sunshine, under the lofty azure dome of a hot cloudless sky. All carried fans and wore high combs, and vividly coloured, and scented flowers in their hair, under the characteristic white lace mantilla invariably associated with Spanish beauty. In fact, with their long glittering earrings, they looked exactly like the showy Senoras depicted on cigar boxes and fans. In front of each box the ladies hung great Manila shawls, large as bedspreads, of bright silk—orange, scarlet, imperial purple, royal blue and emerald—embroidered with gaudy flowers in every hue of the rainbow and bordered with fringe fully a foot and a half in depth. As a result the gallery presented a most fantastical and kaleidoscopic appearance. It cast a certain glamour of unreality over the proceedings.

All were in holiday mood, laughing and talking at the top of their voices. Men stood on the seats regardless of those

behind. Various theatrically attired individuals began to appear in the arena. A man entered wearing dark trousers and a violet shirt. Apparently his business in life was confined to cracking a whip. This he did most effectually with a noise resembling the firing of a pistol. Others affected white shirts and scarlet sashes. More resplendent still were bull fighters in gaily coloured knee breeches, pink stockings and low black shoes. These wore short tightly fitting boleros with long sleeves and stiff shoulder-deep collars, the whole costume richly embroidered in gold and silver. Each was further distinguished by a three cornered hat of black beaver, and carried a great cloak folded crosswise over the left shoulder. Despite these brilliant apparitions the audience, which now numbered some thousands of spectators, began to grow restive. Suddenly the military band struck up. The Captain General had entered.

The proceedings began with the entry of two black cloaked riders mounted on horses of the same sable hue. They were entirely in black but for the purple and white ostrich plumes which waved above their cocked hats. These they doffed in front of the royal box and promptly galloped away. They were followed by a fantastical procession of toreros, picadores, or horsemen, banderilleros on foot, and matadores, who formed a ring round the arena. The picadores wore yellow buckskin trousers, gay cummerbunds, gold embroidered boleros and round hats. Their saddles were of the large Moorish variety, and rose in high points, at the pommel and cantel, with deep boot stirrups.

The dramatic moment had arrived. The barrier was drawn aside, and the bull driven into the arena. He was a splendid specimen and in perfect condition—black, sleek coated, short legged with a small but powerful body. A bunch of red and white ribbons fluttered gaily from his hump. At an agricultural show he would have excited universal admiration. He had come out of the dark and was dazed. For the past few days he had been prepared for the ordeal by being kept without food, or water, and in inky darkness. Just at the last he was treated to an ample feed, so entered the circus "heavy and waterlogged." For a moment he hesitated, dazzled by the flood of sunshine. Then he looked up and saw the thousands of eyes fixed upon him. Possibly he read the blood lust in them and was seized with a presentiment of pending doom. Badly frightened he turned and tried to run back. Too late! The barrier was shut.

The banderilleros advanced in a semicircle spreading their great coloured cloaks in front of him—yellow, flame, purple, green and blue. He was bewildered and obviously at a loss in which direction to charge. The men, screened by their cloaks, offered an elusive and dazzling target. After this had gone on for some time, and the bull had made several ineffective rushes, he turned and made for one of the half dozen wretched horses being slowly ridden round for that purpose, caught it up between the hind quarters and ripped it, a disgusting sight, which elicited universal applause. The picador was thrown. Assistants hastened to his aid, and he actually remounted the terribly wounded animal, which was forced to stagger on. Meanwhile the bull had charged a second horse inflicting a deep gash in the belly. By this time, he began to show signs of fatigue. A gaily clad combatant, armed with a barbed lance about two feet long, advanced nimbly and jabbed the weapon into the bull, where the bright ribbons fluttered at his hump. The bull bellowed with pain and tried to shake himself free, but the barbed darts were on the harpoon principle and stuck fast. Next he endeavoured to escape from the ring and his tormentors, but the cloaked men closed round him again spreading their gaudy mantles.

Three more pairs of darts were thrust deeply into his horribly mutilated back. This ghastly game had continued for about half an hour—the longest half hour I have ever spent—when the Captain General, with a wave of his handkerchief, gave the signal for the wounded horses to be removed. At the same time it began to rain. All sought cover. For a brief interval the bull was alone in the arena. His back resembled a pincushion it was stuck so full of darts. The blood was streaming from him but he was far from dead. He was capable of yet further suffering. The look of fear and agony in the eyes of that tortured animal is a sight I shall not soon forget.

For him there was no escape. Not so for me. I made for the exit. As I was passing out an official offered me a ticket of re-entry. There were still five more bulls to be killed! Possibly it was as well that he did not understand my reply. At that moment had the bull gored every spectator present, and the horses trampled them under foot I should have shouted for joy.

CHAPTER XX

SAN SEBASTIAN

IT was midnight when I reached San Sebastian, the most fashionable seaside resort in Spain. An omnibus, drawn by a powerful pair of horses, lumbered heavily through the lamp lit darkness of what appeared a large, and prosperous town. My destination was the Hotel Central, the original Antigua Parador Real. It owes its proud affix of "Royal" to Alfonso XII, who invariably stayed in it. Possibly, on this account, it makes no attempt to conceal its age under layers of paint, or other superficial efforts at rejuvenation such as lifts, and electric bells. On the contrary it is well content to look what it is, the oldest hotel in the famous Basque seaport.

On arrival I was led up what seemed interminable flights of stairs, and along the mysterious gloom of an endless passage to a surprisingly spacious apartment. The bed lurked, as though ambushed, in an alcove. The polished wooden floor sloped sharply up to the one and only window. This peered inquisitively across a narrow intervening calle at the dark secretive casements of a neighbouring mansion, evidently a contemporary.

Daylight revealed San Sebastian to be a very fine show-place indeed. As though chary of displaying too many charms at once it sheltered behind a filmy grey veil of mist, which enveloped, as with a shroud, the modern splendour of the great brown Casino, its façade adorned with bright glazed tiling and the city's arms, a three masted galley. In front stretched the Alderdi eder, laid out with flower beds, walks, seats and a bandstand. From the centre rose a tall column surmounted by the glittering figure of Victory in a chariot drawn by four horses. Below was a statue of the Queen Mother, Maria Cristina. Here all the nurses and children congregate in the late afternoon, to listen to the band which plays in a glass roofed kiosk below the terrace of the Casino. As a matter of fact there is very little music and much inter-

lude. The scene is a gay one. Expensively dressed children run hither and thither shouting and laughing, while their baby brothers and sisters sit, or lie in perambulators guarded by neat Basque nurses, their long dark hair hanging down in two plaits tied with velvet bows, and crowned by frilled white muslin caps. Above, on the terrace, fashionably dressed Senors and Senoras sit sipping thick chocolate out of diminutive cups, and occasionally waving a hand to their offspring disporting themselves in the palm planted garden below.

To westward the green Bay of La Concha, with its fringe of yellow sand, describes a deep curve between the lofty headland of Monte Iguela, to south, and the castle crowned height of Monte Urgell, on the north. Across the mouth of the harbour stretches the rocky tree clad island of Santa Clara, the white convent in its midst gleaming like a pearl encircled by emeralds. On the east the wide and handsome thoroughfare styled the Alameda, occupies the site of once formidable ramparts demolished in 1863. A splendid esplanade sweeps along the sea front shaded by double avenues of casuarina trees, their light feathery foliage of a rich moss green, and their tops cropped to the semblance of flat, wide spreading Chinese umbrellas. These pass a large and well patronised bathing establishment romantically named La Perla del Oceano. It consists of a big restaurant, where people partake of light refreshment and listen to a string orchestra, while waiting for their friends, who are indulging in either a sea, or freshwater bath in one of the many adjacent small rooms. The price charged for a bano is three pesetas. Soap is an extra and costs forty centimos.

On the first afternoon of my stay I made a trip to Monte Iguela. An electric tram runs out to the foot passing, on the way, the entrance to Miramar, the summer residence of the King. Built on rising ground, on the south-eastern side of the bay, the Palace is surrounded by spacious tree planted grounds. Basque soldiers, in picturesque national uniform, are on guard at the gate. They cut rather quaint figures in scarlet trousers, loose coats to the knee, a vivid indigo blue, belted at the waist, under deep capes, and round floppy red caps marked, in the centre of the crown, by a shining brass disc about the size of a five peseta piece.

A funicular railway climbs the mount in three and a half minutes. The ascent is very steep. On either side rise pines, their sombre green occasionally enlivened by a flash of yellow broom. On reaching the summit the visitor is met by the

usual atrocious little shops, their windows filled with so-called souvenirs and books of picture post cards.

Steps lead up to the old lighthouse perched on the highest point of Iguelda. Here I was greeted by the coast guardsmen on duty. He wore a cream coloured uniform and round Basque cap of navy blue, and carried a toy rifle over his shoulder. He had been a sailor and spoke a little English, of which accomplishment he was very proud. From him I learnt that the lighthouse no longer served its original purpose. Some enterprising spirits had recently fitted it up with a lift and a telescope, through which latter I might look for the modest fee of twenty-five centimos. In view of the prevailing mist I did not avail myself of the opportunity. The cliff fell precipitously to the Bay of Biscay. Every here and there the pallid sunshine pierced the grey shroud of fog sending shafts of faint yellow light to play upon the leaden waves. On the land side the Bay of La Concha lay like a gigantic green scallop shell, its mouth partially closed by the low lying rock of Santa Clara. Behind the little island sheltered a fleet of white schooners, pleasure craft owned by members of the Real Club Nautica, small fishing vessels, and the ominous grey forms of a torpedo destroyer and gunboat. Beyond the yellow line of the beach crowded the red tiled roofs of San Sebastian. Behind again the country rose and fell in a succession of green tree dotted hills to the horizon. Smoke issued from the seven tall chimneys of Suchet's immense chocolate factory, a colony in itself covering the low lying ground to south of the bay. Above it the ridge sloped upwards to the royal palace erected in English cottage style by a British architect between 1889 and 1893. He so far conformed to Spanish national sentiment as to introduce octagonal miradors at either extremity. A typical English lawn and flower beds spread out in front. Altogether Miramar produces the effect of an opulent country mansion rather than the summer palace of a King.

On a stone terrace, overhanging the Bay of Biscay, I partook of a small cup of thick chocolate, served with a glass of water and a banana shaped roll of sugar faintly flavoured with lemon. When broken up and melted this last formed a very mild sherbert. Probably another of the many legacies left by the Moors. The accompanying cakes were hot and rather suggested twisted yellow snakes. They were excellent and tasted like very sweet crisp pancakes. Through the open window of the restaurant I saw a number of people

collected round a little table where *Petit Chevaux* was in progress. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that "lookers on see most of the game" for the spectators far outnumbered the players.

From the edge of the terrace the headland shelved sharply to the water's edge, its precipitous face green with grass, bracken and bush. Midway down a white gleam came from the new lighthouse. The sea hissed and foamed at the rock strewn foot of the indented line of cliffs while, higher up, the motor road threaded its way like a silver strand in a green tapestry.

Back into the town where the most luxurious of French motor cars afford a striking contrast to slow moving wagons drawn by immense fawn coloured oxen, their necks swathed in sheepskin, a curious custom which invests these mild eyed plodding beasts of burden with a lion-like mane. The practice must be peculiar to the Basque provinces for I encountered it nowhere else in Spain.

Although much of San Sebastian is modern having been rebuilt since the disastrous siege of 1813, enough remains to render the place of interest to those who, figuratively speaking, prefer old wine to new. For them the neighbourhood immediately behind the Casino will be full of charm. Here lies the *Antigua Parador Real*. To west of it the sombre brown mansion of the Military Governor looks on to the ancient quay, its sea wall a drying ground for fishing nets, and its prevailing atmosphere a mingled odour of tar, ropes, fish, salt water, boats and that strong tobacco beloved of sailors the world over. Near by is the narrow harbour. It is so closely packed with various craft that it is a mystery to the landlubber how any vessel manages to disentangle herself from the chaos of masts and funnels and emerge into the open. There they lie under the green shadow of Castle Hill, its summit crowned by the historic fortress of *La Mola*. On the neighbouring quay the fisher folk continue deliberately about their ancestral vocations as though the Casino, and the fine folk from Madrid had never existed, or were as remote as the South Pole, and this, despite the fact that, under their very eyes, stretches the slender iron pier of the Royal Yacht Club, whose premises, a spick and span white steam yacht, rides hard by under the western wall of the Casino.

'Inland, to north, strikes the straight and narrow *Callé Mayor*. Its far end frames the florid façade of *Santa Maria*, the oldest Church in San Sebastian, built so close up to the

cliff side that it seems as though the overhanging trees had their roots in its roof. A white-sailed ship surmounts its doorway and its twin belfries are capped by Moorish domes. The interior is vast, gloomy and chill. The three aisles are flanked by handsome altars hung with votive offerings, eloquent and pathetic reminders of the perils of the deep, and the impotence of man's puny efforts when at grips with the elements. Never is the menace of the sea brought so vividly before the imagination as in some such dim old chapel on the coast.

To the left of the mariner's church stone steps mount to the winding way leading up Mount Urgell, a lonely walk with memories of old sieges for company. Seized by the French in 1808 the fortress on the top put up a determined defence under General Rey in 1813, when menaced by a combined British, Spanish and Portuguese attack led by Graham. Finally it fell on August 18th after a siege of fifteen days.

The path ascended steeply. On the left a substantial wall bounded the precipice, which dropped sheer to the sea. To right towered the face of the cliff patterned with bracken, yellow gorse, purple heather and an occasional great grey slab. Up it climbed to a jagged rent in the overhanging rocks. Here, amid a tangle of coarse fern, and tall white flowering weeds, lurched a number of tumble-down tomb stones. Some of the tablets were let into the crag itself. Others adorned big boulders. No wilder, or more romantic cemetery could be imagined, or desired. The inscriptions were for the most part illegible although a British name could be made out here and there, notably on one slab, of pure white marble, which gleamed from out the wilderness with the brilliancy of a belated patch of snow in the summer sunshine. Evidently it had been subjected to a very thorough renovation. The newly cut letters read: "Sacred to the memory of Sir Richard Fletcher, Bart., Captain C. Rhodes, Captain C. Collyer and Lieut. E. Machell of the Corps of Royal Engineers, who fell at the siege of San Sebastian August 3rd-18th, 1813." Others, emblazoned with heraldic devices, bore Spanish and Portuguese names. Barbed wire stretched in front of the irregular enclosure, which was further protected by a locked gate. I was about to scramble over it when a warning shout sounded from above. Looking up I perceived a coastguardsman, rifle in hand, gesticulating wildly from the ramparts overhead. This I took to mean that trespassing was forbidden. Climbing a little higher I sat

down to rest on the short harsh grass. The sun was shining and the sea stretched blue and calm to the distant line of the sky. A little below me lay the mouldering tombs of my countrymen. There they sleep in their neglected weed grown graves on the cliff side, within sight and sound of the restless waves of the Bay of Biscay, under the crumbling brown walls of the fortress, which cost them their lives. In the harbour, far beneath, the torpedo destroyer, and the gunboat were gaily dressed with red and yellow flags in honour of the burial of the Cid in Burgos Cathedral; a proof, were any needed, that the memory of the brave never dies.

Yet another excursion I made before quitting Spanish soil. It was to the top of Monte Ullo, the third great headland bounding the neighbouring bay to the north. Time was when the electric tram ran to the summit. Some years ago a syndicate purchased the hill, with the intention of converting it into a residential suburb. This, seemingly, would have made the tram more necessary than ever. Instead it ceased to run. Inscrutable are the ways of that Finance which "moulds our ends roughhew them as we may."

On leaving the main thoroughfare I struck west along the deserted line, its iron rails now deeply sunken, and the track patched with grass. Wearying of this rather monotonous method of progress I essayed a short cut, and was soon zigzagging up a steep and stony track thorny with brambles and blackberry bushes. Occasionally flights of steps, to left or right, gave access to pleasant villas, silent and lifeless but for the sharp sudden barking of a dog. Higher still to the hard grey road which wound laboriously round the mountain. Pines filled the balmy air with fragrance. Tall bracken carpeted the red earth varied by the yellow of gorse and the purple of heather. So on to the heather clad summit through the dark shadow of sombre trees. Steps led to a slender iron turret, whence excursionists, before the advent of the syndicate, used to be swung across an aerial railway to the opposite peak known as the Pena de Aguilá.

At a slightly lower level, melancholy and forlorn, stood the deserted fonda. Virginia creeper, sad and mournful as a widow's weeds, veiled its once hospitable roof and hung in trails down its walls. Its blank windows still gazed down at the twin bays divided by the green height of Monte Urgell.

The descent was quickly made by a series of short cuts, steep narrow goat tracks slippery with pine needles, between hedges of blackberry bushes bright with swarms of small

chestnut coloured butterflies. Now and then I passed under the strongly buttressed walls of a rude, but substantial cottage, where the fragrance of pines was temporarily drowned by the strong odour of pigs and fowls.

I reached Henday, on the French frontier at 11.30 a.m., and was immediately lost in the indescribable confusion of the Custom House. After my handbag had been examined and chalk marked by an old woman, I was required to present myself before the inspector of passports. Thereafter my luggage had to be weighed. Here I was held up by a young man possessed of two enormous wooden trunks. As a result I missed my train and was compelled to wait until 5 p.m., for the next. Finally I was aboard the crowded Paris express travelling rapidly northwards. As I stood looking out of the window, the sun, an immense red gold ball of flame, sank slowly over the dark tops of the pines into the sea. My thoughts, swiftest of travellers, were not of France, in which I was, nor of England, whither I was bound, but of Spain.

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